









preaching it, finding a principle of order and civility in what is otherwise an appalling miscellany. We are delivered from chaos, from anarchy, by comprehending its occult law: ideas are the vehicles of comprehension. "Deliverance" is Arnold's word in "On the Modern Element in Literature". The demand for deliverance arises, he says, "because the present age exhibits to the individual man who contemplates it the spectacle of a vast multitude of facts awaiting and inviting his comprehension". Deliverance begins "when our mind begins to enter into possession of the general ideas which are the law of this vast multitude of facts". And it is perfect "when we have acquired that harmonious acquiescence of mind which we feel in contemplating a grand spectacle that is intelligible to us".

Honan's programme seems innocent, and perhaps noble. But it contains, I believe, an impurity of motive. In a benign light you could say that ideas are the certainties by which the chaos of facts is rendered intelligible. But in a sharper light you would say that Arnold wanted ideas to deliver him from the bewilderment and the insecurity of experience. He wanted not experience but release from it into a world characterized by the free play and currency of ideas. In Arnold himself the currency of ideas often takes the form of premature generalizations about France, Italy, Germany, Ireland, England, America, the three social classes, culture, democracy, and so forth.

The notion of ideas as a substitute for experience, or as an easier form of experience, explains, I believe, what Eliot had in view in a famous paragraph on Henry James. I cannot read the paragraph without thinking that he had in mind a contrast between James and Arnold.

James's critical genius comes out most tellingly in his mystery over, his baffling escape from, ideas: a mastery and an escape which are perhaps the last test of a superior intelligence. He had a mind so fine that no idea could violate it. Englishmen, with their uncritical admiration (in the present age) for France, like to refer to France as the Home of Ideas. . . . England, on the other hand, if it is not the Home of Ideas, has at least become infested with them in about the space of time within which Australia has been overrun by rabbits. In England ideas run wild and pasture on the emotions; instead of thinking with our feelings (a very different thing) we corrupt our feelings with ideas; we produce the political, the emotional idea, evading sensation and thought.

If we put beside this passage Henry Adams's remark in the *Education* that "the mind resorts to reason for want of training", we see that the question of ideas in Arnold is one with which a biographer who offers his work as definitive should have engaged.

Park Honan's claims for Arnold's poetry are notably high. *The Strayed Reveller*, he says, "seems a great thing - and a valuable rarity today - because for sheer lyrical beauty it is the best first collection of lyrics by an Englishman from Arnold's time to ours". That doesn't necessarily make it a great thing. Quoting the stanzas about *Tiresias* and the *Centaur*, Honan remarks: "One may say that in our own century in English poetry only T. S. Eliot has equaled 'his ineffably', 'Empedocles on Stina'." Is perhaps, as critics have said, the finest work of its length in Victorian literature. But Honan does not examine the poems, or look closely at their ways with language; he does not consider if a major disability, apparently, that they are so limited to one tone, that of "the sad probation", gloom, dismay, engagement, "the burden of ourselves", and "unredeemable pain"; that they are so demonstrably a function of low spirits. James's sense of them, is better judged than Honan's. James says of the poetry:

"With its cultivated simplicity, its aversion to cheap ornament, its slight abuse of meagreness for distinction's sake, his verse has a kind of minor magic and always gains to the point - the particular ache, or regret, or conjecture, to which poetry is supposed to address itself."

Arnold's reason for writing *Strayed*

Arnold's criticism are, as one would expect, more elegant. But he dives good reasons beyond the reach of debate. He enjoys, as everyone does, Arnold's vivacities of expression. He enjoys them so much that he rarely pauses to consider whether they amount to an exorbitance. Arnold's rhetorical power, like F. R. Leavis's, was extraordinary. Like Leavis, too, he won many disciples not because he served the better cause but because he had more street-knowledge than his opponent, and a determination to win at any price. I have never been persuaded by *On Translating Homer* that Francis Newman's sense of Homer was inferior to Arnold's, but it hardly matters: what one recalls from the book is Arnold's swashbuckling prose, leaping about like Douglas Fairbanks.

Honan's comments on *On Translating Homer* are judicious: for once, he is not inclined to use superlatives. But a few pages later he says that Arnold's best essays "are emotionally as true as scenes in Shakespeare: the emotive attitude to the idea, in Arnold, enriches the idea, so that we feel he is driving at the heart of human life". The tone of this avowal seems grandiose; something more discriminating is needed. The problem is that Professor Honan does not always ask himself the right questions, or allow other voices into his book, to ask them. Eliot said of Arnold: "He had no real security, only an impeccable demeanour". Shouldn't a biographer consider whether this is true or not?

Honan's general sense of Arnold's critical achievement is appropriately vigorous. "An understanding of him", he says, "is really more useful to us than an understanding of any other Englishman of the last century". Not the only begueter of modern criticism, Arnold is the critic who, more than anyone else, shows what, in the way of energy and vigilance, a serious criticism entails. If we isolate a particular kind of criticism, we can easily find another critic who practises it more convincingly than Arnold does. Arnold's greatest consists in his making available, more completely than anyone else, the role of "the general critic", the man who directs the force of his intelligence upon the common life and its manifestations. The general critic thinks his own business hardly worth minding except so far as it coincides with everyone's business. If he is a literary critic, it is because the formal complexity of literature protects him from the naivety of thinking that he has understood the common life when he has merely registered its most vociferous forms.

Arnold's achievement as a great general critic may be acknowledged, all due qualifications having been made, by assenting to the entirely proper claim he made in a famous passage in the first chapter of *Culture and Anarchy*:

We have not won our political battles, we have not carried our main points, we have not stopped our adversaries' advance, we have not marched victoriously with the modern world; but we have told silently upon the mind of the country, we have prepared currents of feeling which sap our adversaries' position when it seems gained, we have kept up our own communications with the future.

The style is deservedly high. It hardly matters that little of our thinking about literature and society is conducted, in fact, under the auspices of Arnold's reiterated phrase: "sweetness and light": the study of perfection: Barbarians, Philistines, and Populace; Hellenism and Hebraism; the grand style; disinterestedness; the provincial spirit; to see the object as in itself it really is; poetry is at bottom a criticism of life. The phrases have not retained their power to compel. But Arnold is still compelling because of the force with which he kept up his communications with the future. It is chiefly because of Arnold that the literary critic has not become, to its impoverishment, entirely literary: that a general criticism is still practised by critics who nevertheless have a particular commitment to literature. I am thinking of such books as Leavis's *Education and the University*, Tillyard's *The Liberal Imagination*, Kenneth Burke's *Attitudes towards History*, and Nicola Chiaromonte's *The Work of Consciousness*. The list is, happily, innumerable.

## Deep beneath the cosmetics

By Peter Kemp

HELEN NEBEKER:

Jean Rhys: *Woman in Passage*  
A Critical Study of the Novels of Jean Rhys.  
222pp. Eden Press Women's Publications. \$8.95.  
0 920792 04 9

It's rumoured that Jean Rhys's last words were "Please, my eye shadow". If true, nothing could be more appropriate. As a novelist, she never tired of reaching for the make-up. Like her heroines' handbags, her books seem stocked to bursting with cosmetics. The attention authors generally bestow on people's facial features is, in her fiction, given to the artificial layers they smear over them. *Quartet*, her first novel, appreciatively itemizes the artful tints of a girl "with an astonishingly accurate make-up" and comments admiringly on the *patron* of a Montparnasse gay-bar who was "beautifully made up. Crimson was where crimson should be and rose-colour where rose-colour". Nor are beauty-aids, in this book, merely decorative. They signal emotional states (the heroine's demoralization shows itself in "lips badly and inadequately rouged") and friendly alliances - her brief antiy with her lover's wife takes the form of spending half an hour helping her to make up.

Paint and powder also work over time in Rhys's next book, *After Leaving Mr Mackenzie*. Julia's "late-late, blackened eyelids" goad her sister to vindictiveness but attract a lover who speaks fondly of "your lovely dark eyelids (what is the stuff you put on them?)". Even at moments of drama, the Rhys woman retains her knowledgeable eye for the real world. Anna of *Voyage to the Dark* is about to be tumbled into a drunken threesome, mainly registers that the other woman is clumsily made up: "I could see . . . just where her lipstick stopped and hers began". Distracted Sasha, in *Good Morning, Midnight*, notes with almost hallucinatory clarity "the exact shade of the blue eye-shadow worn by a woman in a bar."

Regularly fumbled for at moments of crisis, cosmetics offer a survival kit for the Rhys heroine. Outblowing as makeup display and protective colouring, they enable her to attract the attention of the men she is emotionally and economically dependent upon, and to deflect the critical scrutiny of other women. One heroine thinks of make-up as "a substitute for the mask she would have liked to wear". And masks are of considerable significance to Jean Rhys. Her books are full of them and of remarkable about the need for camouflage.

Seemingly to be "just like most other people" is "a big advantage" in this fiction. A fear of looking different haunts the Rhys woman. Avoiding being stared at is a constant preoccupation: and with good cause since these novels glitter - like some nightmare forest in a children's book - with hostile eyes. Painfully self-conscious about their precarious social status, Rhys's protagonists - kept girls, amateur prostitutes, alcoholic female floaters - repeatedly undergo ordeal by censoring glare. Housewives glower at them; bar-maid-staff, landladies watch with knowing contempt. Blushes are masked by rouge as embarrassment, the emotion most frequently experienced by the Rhys woman - wells up in response to disapproving public scrutiny. Pajic-reactions like Sasha's in a restaurant - "everyone in the room is staring at me" - are shared by the other female protagonists. And it's not only people who can unnervingly them with a look. One girl recoils from the stare of a face on a chocolate box; another is "disconcerted by the steady gaze of some superior-looking dolls."

The most threatening eyes in Jean Rhys's fiction are light blue. These

first glint out from her resentful portrait of Ford Madox Ford, *Heavenly Bodies*. Re-appearing obsessively afterwards, they are associated with "Anouk's" calculation: strength: the qualities the Rhys woman so disastrously lacks and is so masochistically drawn to. Always, Rhys's writing focuses on this interplay of opposing types: the tough bourgeois, despoiling the woman he's used; the soft bohemian, craving for the man who has exploited her. Other polarities assemble round this, too: the well-heeled are set against the penniless; the cosmopolitan clashes with the suburban; the chilly greyness of European cities is interlarded with techie-coloured memories of the West Indies and their lost luxuriance.

Standing out amidst these exotic reminiscences are the trees of the tropics - nutmeg, mango, mimosa. And even the drabber trees of London or Paris are contemplated with wistful frequency by the Rhys heroine - perhaps because they contrast so notably with her own rootless existence. One girl, linking two of Rhys's continuing concerns, has a dream in which "all the trees are masks and only the trees are alive". In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rochester watches a tree "strike its roots deeper, making ready to fight the wind". The Rhys heroine, that "feather on the sea of fate", never fights the wind but is swept helplessly before it: all five novels and many of the stories show a woman being carried, almost unresistingly, towards destruction.

Jean Rhys - who said that, when writing, she felt like "a pen in someone else's hand" - is fascinated by the passive and the rootless. The women she concentrates on are all broken-willed expatriates, "used to a lack of solidity and fixed backgrounds". Nothing in their lives is permanent. Jobs come and go, so do lovers. Long tracts of their days are spent in disconsolate trappings through the blurred, impressionistic streetscapes. Rhys is a potentially powerful writer, with gas-lamps flickering outside the *bureaux* of Amsterdam, where the lights move in the cold canals like gold caterpillars. Forlorn behind her layer of cosmetic bravado, the Rhys heroine drifts in and out of hotels, restaurants, bars, especially bars; for drink, glazing the mind, is as necessary for getting by as make-up, covering the face. Moods are transient as well: determination-slumps continually into a bout of "cafard", "the blues", "la misère".

Thin-skinned and blurry at the edges, Rhys's depressive solitudes can be hard to tell apart. In recollection, Marya, Julia, Anna, Sasha haze together into one mascaraed wail moosely impelled towards another Pernod and another pick-up. Happily for the books, there's more to them than this. The heroines' surroundings - London in the ragtime era, Paris in the Twenties - are atmospherically reconstructed and teeming populated. Almost outstaging the listless female leads, gaudy troupes of artists and eccentrics throng and vitalize the books: chorus girls and *femmes nues*; Apache dancers and Gelsia girls; Louis and Louise, tango dancers from the cabaret; Plump Polly from the Folies who causes a scandal at the Dôme; a Swedish masseuse called Ethel who has a friend appearing in the film *Three-Fingered Kate*; a rowdy bevy of male nequines - men, hotel-staff, landladies watch with knowing contempt. Blushes are masked by rouge as embarrassment, the emotion most frequently experienced by the Rhys woman - wells up in response to disapproving public scrutiny. Pajic-reactions like Sasha's in a restaurant - "everyone in the room is staring at me" - are shared by the other female protagonists. And it's not only people who can unnervingly them with a look. One girl recoils from the stare of a face on a chocolate box; another is "disconcerted by the steady gaze of some superior-looking dolls."

This is the fictional world that Helen Nebeker, in what is advertised as the "first complete study of the novels of Jean Rhys by a woman scholar", sets out to explore. Spurning the social and psychological elements in the books, however, she opts to travel "through shadowy mazes of Freudian symbols and into the dream world of mythic archetypes". The Rhys heroine, she argues, is "dark, almost forgotten racial memory", she discerns "the dim outlines of a female-centred myth (long lost in the mists of time)". And it is this myth, she believes, that Rhys's heroines, denied "the mythical mother-goddess", are substituting for themselves. The heroines of these novels, Jean Rhys: *Woman in Passage* explains, are really avatars of "the Great Triple Goddess". Though none has a surviving child, they are, as Professor Nebeker sees things, unmistakable images of "the ancient mother-goddess". Around them, completing the primal picture, minor characters are also garishly transmogrified. A lurking male accoster turns into the "masculine half of the soul image . . . an initiator into the unconscious", while a commercial traveller in a dressing gown becomes "that archetypal her-maphroditic image of the male-female force united".

In support of her unusual conclusions, Nebeker uses an abundance of Italics, upper-case, and exclamation marks, and some inventive critical procedures. An especially favoured technique is looking up the derivation of characters' names in order to unearth "the underlying mythic motifs associated therewith". Under-terred by plaintive missives despatched to her by Jean Rhys - "I don't know anything about what names are supposed to mean", "I do feel that [you read] into my books a lot that I didn't mean" - Nebeker works tirelessly at this until a novel like *After Leaving Mr Mackenzie* becomes "so complex it almost defies discussion". Typical of the fruits of this unstoppable deciphering is the triumphant discovery, apropos of a character called Uncle Griffiths, that "Griffith means 'red-haired'". Since the book states plainly that "His hair was white", it's difficult to see what could usefully be made of this, let Professor Nebeker flourish so impressively.

Despite further disclaimers from Jean Rhys - "Freud, Adler and so on are just names to me . . . I know little about Jean-Paul Sartre . . . and existentialism" - also brought to bear on the books, Freudian analysis proves especially valuable for extracting hidden significance. "The falling out of teeth", Nebeker declares, "symbolizes castration, the punishment for onanism". And after some vibrant commentary on a distressing scene where a little girl notes that her uncle is wearing dentures, she judiciously draws attention to Maudie, a chorus girl who "interestingly . . . has a missing tooth". This presumably makes Maudie a castrated chorus girl - just another of the odd phenomena, like the white-haired red-head and haremboyish travelling salesman, that Professor Nebeker is so adept at spotting.

Couched, for the most part, in a style of lurid gush - "Rhys flatters out women and men . . . whose pale will tear out our eyes", "Rochester truly has no psychic life" - into a frenzied book finally works itself into a frenzied bizarre assertion. Vehemently insisting that Jean Rhys "created" *Eye* so that it is "actually the latest novel in her own sequential myth", Nebeker backs this by the dramatic claim that "Charlotte Brontë, Jean Rhys and, in a sense, Helen Nebeker have become inextricable on the im-mutable sea of time". Luckily for the novelists, this isn't so. As *Woman in Passage* amply demonstrates Helen Nebeker is way out on her own, though admittedly all at sea.

In *A New Mythos* (200pp. Montreal: Eden Press Women's Publications. \$8.95. 0 920792 11 1) Grace Stewart examines the role of myth in the work of female artists. Subtitled "The Novel of the Artist as Heroine" (1977), the work traces the paths that such notable women writers as Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf, Doris Lessing and Erica Jong have pursued in depicting heroines engaged in the creative arts, and draws conclusions concerning the mythic pattern underlying their writings. Two central chapters deal with *Fanny Hill* and the Artist as Heroine and "Demeter/Persephone".

Rhys's heroine, she argues, is "dark, almost forgotten racial memory", she discerns "the dim outlines of a female-centred myth (long lost in the mists of time)". And it is this myth, she believes, that Rhys's heroines, denied "the mythical mother-goddess", are substituting for themselves. The heroines of these novels, Jean Rhys: *Woman in Passage* explains, are really avatars of "the Great Triple Goddess". Though none has a surviving child, they are, as Professor Nebeker sees things, unmistakable images of "the ancient mother-goddess". Around them, completing the primal picture, minor characters are also garishly transmogrified. A lurking male accoster turns into the "masculine half of the soul image . . . an initiator into the unconscious", while a commercial traveller in a dressing gown becomes "that archetypal her-maphroditic image of the male-female force united".

## The nymph with the knife

By Virginia Llewellyn Smith

ROSAMOND LEHMANN:

*Invitation to the Waltz*  
302pp. Virago. £2.95.  
0 86068 202 1

The Weather in the Streets

383pp. Virago. £2.95.  
0 86068 203 X

As a small child, Rosamond Lehmann used to watch the fairies dance outside the window of her Buckinghamshire home. One day her sister discovered a pile of white paper dolls on strings behind her father's wardrobe. Disabused, the little girls made a pact never to tell what they had found. Rosamond, the one who wanted to write, grew up to produce novels in which a yearning for beauty and romance is overlaid by the assumption that illusions are likely to be lost, and that one should put a brave face on it when they are.

*Dusty Answer*, her first book, is about Judith Earle, a young girl with no family life of her own who, dreaming of love, becomes passionately involved first with a group of glamorous cousins and then with her Cambridge friend Jennifer - "the most beautiful person". What drives Judith and Jennifer, with their heightened aesthetic sensibility, into each other's arms is Gorton, a schoolgirl world of greasy faces and pink flannel dressing gowns, brilliantly and horribly evoked: the room makes much better reading today than Judith's embarrassing emotional outpourings. But in 1927 these caused a sensation - "an explosion of the zeitgeist" to the words of the author, who received hundreds of letters from would-be lovers male and female. But in fact Judith's attitude to sex - the preoccupation being that the man say "I love you", marriage the proper follow-up - seemed old-

fashioned to her lover even then. Youthfully self-absorbed and romantically impetuous though she is, Judith's values are firmly traditional. This, and her wry acceptance of disappointment, and perhaps most of all a vitality in the writing which belies the adolescent lugubriousness of the title, probably explains why the book appealed to many older readers, those who weren't shocked. It launched Rosamond Lehmann on a career of novel-writing.

Her succès de scandale was not something she exploited. *Invitation to the Waltz* (1932) is a conscious, careful evocation of a fixed and settled way of life. The subject is a few days in the life of seventeen-year-old Olivia Curtis and her sister Kate. Bit by bit, like a jigsaw moving outwards from the centre of Olivia's consciousness, a complete picture is assembled: a world of wide lawns and honeysuckle lanes, populated by dignified parents, respectful servants and ex-colonial colonels, where splinter dressmakers affect genteel accents and ragged children wheeled out the latest bulky "as ants coming in eggs". Acutely observed distinctions of class and generation produce an effect of timelessness - a world rather like that of Richard Crompton's children's books, only its heroines are not nearly so subversive as William Brown.

Olivia goes to her first dance, where she is afraid she will not strike her well-born hosts, the Spencers, and their guests as adequately smart and sophisticated. We share her agonies, but also her judgments, trenchant enough where certain concepts well-embedded in her and Kate are involved: as they spin round the room, those blades that flashed in the Gorton corridors are out again, to our delight, everything down the "old fogey" mouthpiece "as boys and savvy", the curate-to be as "surface glister" procured as their partner, and many another. For at the zenith of the sisters' conceptual universe is the idea of the dream lover - they allot one to every village spinster. But Olivia herself, observed in

clustered encounters with intellectual young men, is as sheltered and vulnerable as any village spinster; we see her pulled towards the brink of a world where values are not traditional, and the good child will not know how to cope. "One . . . would very likely land oneself in a mess one day", Olivia dimly apprehends; and shortly afterwards, on the terrace, meets Rollo Spencer, son of the house, tall, handsome, blue-eyed, the dream lover made flesh.

*The Weather in the Streets* (1936) takes up the story ten years on. Rollo and Olivia meet again on a train and fall in love. He, married to a sickly society beauty, is frustrated. She (like other Lehmann heroines) has grown beautiful, and did very well at university; but her marriage has failed, and without a husband or even a profession, mixing with an arty, heterogeneous crowd, she is cut adrift from her background. Not from her dreams, though, and the affair with Rollo comes as the fulfilment of these. What follows is an idyll, in parts, Olivia feels as it were in a glass case, safe from the weather outside; Rollo says "I love you" at the right moments; the perfect gentleman, he sends lilies and champagne when she has flu. No wonder his wife kept to her bed, one thinks, and is surprised not to be echoing Olivia: for the narrative, always tending to become overstretched and overblown, is at intervals punctuated and deflated by jabs of irony; thus, Olivia, nymph in white, at the dinner-party where she captivates her dream lover: "I love puddings," she said, in the style of perfect confession. "In fact, I love food altogether."

But the paint-stripping technique is not used on Rollo, whose image remains pretty resplendent, and though envious male reviewers have called him a cad, the absence of snideness or bitterness in Olivia's

portrait of Rollo is one of the book's great strengths. The relationship disintegrates because of differences not between two personalities, but between two ways of life. In the scene where Olivia gazes through the window at Rollo in his solid, comfortable house, the significance of the title does a heavy about-turn: she is outside in the streets, her mode of existence has no formal definition, her element is the London fog, tellingly described as "a grubby jaeger shroud".

How much does she want to come inside? Enough to get rid of Rollo's baby, which is aborted in the name of respectability (and without a whiff of ethical misgiving). Three things spur Olivia on to this, for her, inevitable conclusion: pregnancy makes her terribly sick; and Lady Spencer, Rollo's mother, asks her to make him an honest family man again; and she is fond of Lady Spencer. In her female frailty Olivia is everywoman, though also very much a child of her class and time; and she is woman's woman. All of which accounts in large part for the popularity of her story, now as then.

As much as in the affair with Rollo, the heart of the book lies in Olivia's attitude to his mother, and in her relationship with her own mother and sister. This is summarized as the three have supper on one of Olivia's infrequent visits home:

Across the table they began to play a peaceful shuttle . . . renewing, re-enforcing, patching over rents and frayed places with old serviceable threads. They were tough still; they were a family. That which had chanced to tie them all up together from the start persisted irrevocably, far below consciousness . . . uniting them in a mysterious reality.

This is a credo; but the scenes between Olivia, Mrs Curtis and Kate

do capture remarkably, in tone and substance, exactly the sort of thing mothers, daughters and sisters say to each other, and in this way are revealed the affections and tensions which, dividing Olivia, make her situation interesting. Family ties, in fact, are the knots which hold the book's theme and structure together when "the heroine's natural absorption threaten to make this diffuse. Nothing else has their solid reality - least of all Olivia's life with her own friends. "Dear Anna, I like her so much", she says of a character who fills many pages, but Anna's image holds our attention as briefly as any "unidentified friend" on the edge of a family group.

The tragic death of her own daughter in 1938 stopped Rosamond Lehmann from writing for many years. In 1967 appeared *The Swan in the Evening*, "fragments of an inner life", in which the author tells something of herself as a novelist, but more about her daughter and the mystical/psychic experiences that were restoring the relationship to her.

Her latest novel, *A Sea-Grape Tree* (1976), is a romantic fantasy set on a desert island, and it disappoints because there is too much dream and not enough reality. But Rosamond Lehmann's revival seems assured now by Penguin (who have just republished *Dusty Answer* and *The Echoing Grove*) and by Virago (who have revived also in *The Weather in the Streets* a number of misprints that had crept into the second edition). This renewal of interest is welcome. At a time when Marilyn French's *The Bleeding Heart* - another romance that begins in a train - is still a raw wound in the corpus of female love-literature, it is inexpressibly comforting to settle down for a good wallow in woman's consciousness with a writer as accomplished, funny and readable as Rosamond Lehmann.

## FEW ENGLISH NOVELS COMMAND REVIEWER'S ACCLAIM SUCH AS THIS AND BECOME BESTSELLERS TOO

**Bernard Levin:**  
'Books which address themselves to tremendous themes are few. Those which succeed in simultaneously enthralling and disturbing the reader are fewer still. *Other People* rates very high, under both headings; a rare Anna indeed!'  
*Sunday Times*

**John Nicholson:**  
'A very funny book . . . an achievement light years ahead of his earlier novels. It had me purring with pleasure!'  
*The Times*

**Anthony Thwaite:**  
'A very strange and impressive performance.'  
*Observer*

**J.G. Ballard:**  
'Has all the electrifying conviction of a new reel filmed inside our heads. In an extraordinary way it conveys the actual contours and texture of the uneasy realm wrapped round us by that ambiguous conspiracy between the universe and our own psyches - everyday reality.'  
*Tatler*

**Melvyn Bragg:**  
'That it is an arresting, thoughtful novel by a genuine talent with a touch that could open that seam of imaginative fortune which nourishes the best writers, is not to be doubted.'  
*Punch*

**William Boyd:**  
'An ambiguous and deeply unsettling book - which also contains passages of superb writing (chapter one is a tour de force) and several readings haven't exhausted its riches or come up with any clear answers. Without doubt Martin Amis's best and most thought-provoking novel.'  
*London Magazine*

**Auberon Waugh:**  
'Mr Amis remains the only really interesting novelist of his generation; many of the passages are vivid, funny, moving, even memorable.'  
*Daily Mail*

**MARTIN AMIS**  
**OTHER PEOPLE: A MYSTERY STORY**  
Jonathan Cape/£5.95



# The fantasist and his fan

By Eric Korn

PHILIP ROTH:

Zuckerman Unbound  
225pp. Jonathan Cape. £5.95.  
0 224 01774 0

Fiction is not autobiography, yet all fiction, I am convinced, is in some sense rooted in autobiography, though the connection to actual events may be tenuous indeed... yet there are dangers in writing so closely on the heels of one's own immediate experience: a lack of toughness, perhaps; a tendency to indulgence; an urge to justify the author's ways to men.

Wise and relevant words: well, not exactly. For Philip Roth here puts them in the handwriting of one Alvin Pepler, ex-Marine, ex-quiz contestant, New York (NJ) patriot, paranoid and all-time Jewish and all-comers *midnik* champion. You don't have to be Jewish (as the kosher pickle adverts say) to be a *midnik*, that special kind of aggressive, parasitic bore, but it's no disadvantage, especially in dealing with co-religionists, especially one as vulnerable to every kind of guilt-inducing intrusion as this sour, shrewd and often very funny novel's eponym, Nathan Zuckerman, who is suffering, in addition to all his congenital burdens, the stress of success, wealth and fame from the success of his novel *Carnovsky*, to say nothing of the problem of going through the change of life.

Though *Carnovsky* is plainly akin to *Portnoy's Complaint* in its onanism and variously sexual themes, and in the scandal and enraged accusations of anti-Semitism it provokes, it needs to be said that Zuckerman's response to success is not Roth's to his "public reputation" - a concoction spawned by *Portnoy's Complaint* and compounded largely out of the fantasies that book gave rise to because of its "confessional" strategy... (Interview with Joyce Carol Oates, in *Reading Myself and Others*). Roth, as he relates, wisely took to the hills (actually a writers' refuge in Saratoga Springs) on publication and emerged after four months to find that rumour had put him successively into the arms of Barbara Streisand and into a lunatic asylum.

There is a lot then of somewhat uoese-provoking fact/fiction play in this novel, signalled very early on: in fact on the fly-leaf, which bears an epigraph from the table-talk of E.I. Lonoff, the at-least-partly imaginary literary eminence of *The Ghost Writer*. It is a two-edged, self-referring disclaimer, like Waugh's note to *Brideshead Revisited*: "I am not I; thou art not he or she; they are not they." Or as someone else wrote, "There is no such place as Manchester." Roth, to be sure, knows precisely what he is doing: there is where in the recursive maze of self-awareness where he has not preceded the reader; and at times the sure knowledge with which he knows we know he knows rises from the book like an opaque deliriant gas.

"Novels about unsuccessful writers are an inveterate tradition; but there are problems (as John Braine has recently had explained to him at length) about depicting a successful novelist, if there are any superficial similarities between the author and his creation. It is all right to have people approach the narrator, as they do in the splendidly comic opening scene of this novel, and say 'What the hell are you doing on a bus with your money?' or even 'Hey, you do all that stuff in that book? With all those chicks?' This after all can be seen as a kind of self-deprecation, familiar and acceptable (particularly in England). But beware when you make characters say 'trudeau was here, and he was here and mentioned your name to me: Yves Saint Laurent is giving a big party and his office called for your number' or 'You're our Mr. Proust, Mr. Zuckerman'... The

humour. The compassion. The understanding of our deepest drives." Even if (especially if) the character who says these things gets sent up as something rotten, it is easy to feel that one is being treated to a display of conspicuous achievement.

Especially sexual achievement. If it wasn't for the disclaimer in *Reading Myself and Others*, I might be resentfully wondering about the original of Chesna O'Shea, the Celtic ballistic missile ("all the sorrows of her race and those splendid tits"). I would be wrong. "Creating the illusion of intimacy and spontaneity is not just a matter of letting your hair down and being yourself but of inventing a whole new idea of what 'being yourself' sounds and looks like; 'naturalness' happens not to grow on trees," as Roth has said in a different context.

Zuckerman's idyll with Chesna is short-lived: she has other, less *pepple* fish to fry, being, it is alleged, the mistress of Fidel Castro. (Her touching farewell runs into six lines, quotes Yeats and Byron, and hears a Havana post-mark.) And Zuckerman must return to the importunities of other correspondents, the reproaches of the enraged, the attentions of fantasists, and the unspeakable Alvin Pepler.

Pepler is a great comic monster, the embodiment of what Joyce Carol Oates called "the experience of enduring the bizarre projections of others." He is a psychopath with a weird grievance (among many). The only constant in the vast and fraudulent quiz shows of the 1950s who wasn't prompted but actually knew all the answers, he was forced to take a dive by the network bosses so that the big money could go to some generally acceptable WASP winner. Pepler is planning to recoup his position with an autobiographical musical, and has fabricated a fantasy producer, one Marty Paté, of sybaritic tastes ("Cut flowers in the bathroom... And the food, it all send out, down to salt and pepper"). He pursues Zuckerman with obsequiousness, elaborate demands, and unstoppable monologues, like his mad ranking of the literary giants of Newark, their common hometown:

In my estimation you are up there with Stephen Crane... There's Mary Mapes Dodge, but however much you may admire *Hans Brinker*, it's still only a book for children. I would have to place her third. Then there is LeRoy Jones but him I have no trouble in placing fourth. I say this without racial prejudice, and not as a result of the tragedy that has happened to the city in recent years...

Given some encouragement by the willing victim Zuckerman, he produces the review of *Carnovsky*, naturally already cited. Thinks Zuckerman, who has been studying him as possible material, "When the lion comes up to Hemingway with his review of 'The short happy life of Francis Macomber', it's time to leave the jungle for home."

Worse, Pepler solicits Zuckerman's opinion, "It's straining, isn't it, for an effect?" suggests the tactful Zuckerman, but Pepler replies "That's where you're wrong. It was no strain at all. It just came to me."

Moments later he goes over the top: "The truth *unbiased*, that's what I want. Unbiased by the fact that you only wrote that book because you could. Because of having every break in life there is: While the ones who didn't obviously couldn't! Unbiased by the fact that those hang-ups you wrote about happen to be mine and that you knew it - that you stole it."

It is Pepler's obsessive identification with the protagonist of *Carnovsky* who like his prototype Alexander Portnoy is both fantasist and fantasist, the wankers' wanker as you might say) that has engendered the assault on Zuckerman, an assault that includes inept but still effective threatening telephone-calls. After Pepler's campaign has reached its ejaculatory climax, Zuckerman wonders:

Was that the end of this barrage? Or would Zuckerman's imagination

tion beget still other Peplers conjuring up novels out of his - novels disguising themselves as actuality itself, as nothing less than real?

Pepler's outburst is but one of the chain of denunciations of Zuckerman which forms the book's backbone. He is haunted by his agent ("In all my experience of high-strung pill-poppers, I have never seen any one make such a fusco of fame and fortune"), by his estranged wife's friend Rosemary ("Everytime you leave your voice on her message machine it puts the poor girl back another two months"), by his dying father, whose paralysed lips can just frame the word "bastard", and climactically by his brother after their return from the funeral: "We protect you from knowing what you really are. And what you've done. You killed him, Nathan... Do you really think that conscience is a Jewish invention from which you are immune?" The answer is unspoken, but then the question, like many, perhaps too many here, is rhetorical.

The remedy for Portnoy's Complaint, naturally, is *Letting Go*. At the end of this intelligent but not wholly congenial book Zuckerman has let go altogether, his alienation completed by the discovery that the old Newark synagogue of his childhood is now an African Methodist Episcopal church: "You are no longer any man's son, you are no longer some good woman's husband, you are no longer your brother's brother and you don't come from anywhere any more." Zuckerman is unbound, but like Prometheus, feeling distinctly livelier.

## The real Macondo

By Hilary Spurling

The Diary of "Helena Morley"  
Translated and introduced by Elizabeth Bishop  
281pp. Virago. £3.50.  
0 86068 200 5

Helena Morley is the pseudonym of Alice Dayrell, child of a Brazilian mother and an English diamond miner, born a hundred years ago in the tiny, remote Brazilian mining town of Diamantina where, between the ages of twelve and fifteen, she kept this diary. Helena grew up to marry a bank president, raise a family and become a pillar of society in Rio de Janeiro. It was not until she was in her sixties that her only book, published for private circulation in 1942, brought her fame and a handsome if condescending testimonial ("It is possible that you do not even know us" from the exiled Georges Bernanos, who compared Helena's talent with Rimbaud's, Elizabeth Bishop, in a preface to her English translation first published in 1957, was reminded of passages from Homer, Chaucer, Mark Twain and both the Wordsworths).

But for anyone reading this Virago reissue, the obvious comparison is with Gabriel García Márquez's strange, heady, potent distillation of a fabulous South American reality in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1957). For the small town Helena describes, with its street-sellers peddling sweets and caged singing birds, its legends, processions, celebrations, its witchcraft and sudden death, is next door to Márquez's mythical Macondo. Diamantina is isolated by its mountains as effectively as Macondo by its swamps. Men like Helena's father (who earns barely enough to support a family from diamonds no bigger "than a mosquito's eye") are visionaries, gambling whole lifetimes on the chance of a fortune in the next sieveful of gravel.

Their wives cook, sew, gossip, make lace and wash clothes in the mountain streams but, like the women of Macondo, they too can rise above the humdrum at times: A beautiful bride falls victim (as Ro-

beca did in Macondo) to a jealous enemy's spell, lies for days entranced on Helena's grandmother's kitchen table and is eventually buried, dead or alive ("Gloria... I told me that she had heard Bela cry out when they pressed down the earth on top of her"). Another girl dying of consumption - Cacilda Pimental, a pupil at Helena's school - is declared a saint and (like Remedios the Beauty, who ascended while folding sheets one afternoon in Macondo) achieves an assumption, as Helena rather cattily records: "Cacilda's sanctity grew in such a way that very soon there were people who had seen the cloud carrying her up to heaven and the skies opening to receive her."

But it is not easy for an intelligent and sceptical child to sort reality from illusion in Diamantina: when her sister is cured of colic on the saint's intervention, even the head-headed Helena comes to credit Cacilda's miracles. She is too old to believe any longer in werewolves and the headless mule, or for that matter in the thief whose ability to turn himself into an ant hill terrifies other people (including Helena's own devoted and credulous mother); and she laughs openly at Domingos the barber's schemes for making money by breeding sardines in a mountain stream, or for catching jaguars with flea powder ("I climb a tree with a gun and a tin of powder. From up above, I cough, to attract the jaguar's attention. She looks up, I throw the powder in her eyes, and then I shoot and kill her").

News reaches Diamantina fitfully and often thoroughly garbled, and the inventions brought to Macondo by gossips. Helena is rebuffed for repeating a cousin's tall story about men being descended from monkeys; a friend, half-cracked (like Márquez's José Arcadio Buendía) by wild tales of discovery, "spends his time weighing vultures on the scales in order to invent a flying-machine"; when the first telegraph is inaugurated at a party in Helena's uncle's house, "mama and my aunts were open-mouthed to see how the messages were correct".

These aunts are Helena's mother's sisters, held in check along with their husbands and brothers by her Brazilian grandmother, an unexpectedly indulgent matriarch who schools

Helena in the great Latin American orthodoxies of family, church and the proposition that politics are no concern of "nice people". On the other side stands Aunt Madge, Helena's father's sister: an unassuming, Protestant English spinster dedicated to maintaining standards of a very different sort in the face of almost impossible odds. It is Aunt Madge who takes Helena in hand, dresses her in clothes that make her a laughing stock to her schoolfriends, and teaches her outlandish customs like changing one's shoes before going into the garden, not sleeping in one's clothes, not spitting on the floor or not picking one's teeth at table.

Through Aunt Madge we get a glimpse of the quaint, stiff, little provincial society which Richard Burton found when he visited Diamantina in the 1860s, met Helena's grandfather and escorted Madge herself to a party: the visit of Burton the Englishman, representative of an exotic, far-flung, even fabulous civilization, presides over Helena's childhood, much as the exploits of Drake and Raleigh haunt the jungle round Macondo. Aunt Madge, who knew Burton, is a source of endless humiliation to her niece but also of great pride, inspired by her efforts to tame and subdue a stubbornly alien environment. In a world where babies regularly die or go blind it is not only children who need to establish some sort of hold over chaos and adversity.

The Diary of "Helena Morley" is a small part of this prosaic work of ceaseless domestication. The book itself is witty, inconsequential, matter-of-fact, "relatively tame and unfocused" as Elizabeth Bishop admits in her preface. What makes it so fascinating is precisely the fact that it represents, as it were, the opposite process to Márquez's magical symbolism in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Helena says that she wrote to amuse herself and relieve her feelings. But the ardent terms in which she describes her addition suggest that she knew only too well that the frantic urge to label and identify everyday objects which overtook the people of Macondo when threatened by insomnia and a malign forgetfulness, they too felt that unless they could somehow capture it in words reality would shortly elude them altogether.



C. S. Lewis photographed in 1957 by Norman Parkinson, a portrait included in Norman Parkinson's (122pp, £2.95, 0 904017 41 9), published with an introduction by Terence Pepper by the National Portrait Gallery in connection with their exhibition of the photographer's work (until October 25).

MUMPHREY CARPENTER (Editor):  
The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien  
463pp. George Allen and Unwin.  
£9.95.  
0 04 826005 3

In his inaugural address to the University of Cambridge in 1963, C. S. Lewis remarked that he was a dinosaur, a specimen of "Old Western" man, cut off from his youthful audience by changes of education and sensibility more complete, he believed, than any that had ever happened in the world before. The *Letters* here published make clear how much J. R. R. Tolkien differed from Lewis temperamentally and ideologically. Tolkien thought Lewis hairy, frivolous and sometimes glib, while, as (respectively) an English Catholic philologist and an Irish Protestant critic, they were on opposite sides of many boundary-lines. Still, it is obvious that Tolkien too was a "dinosaur". Born in 1892 and brought up in the middle-class Midlands of Victoria and Edward, he never became alienated from his origins; unlike Robert Graves (and so many other participants in the Great War) he never said "goodbye to all that".

The reflexes of "Old Western man" show up in many ways in these letters. Over patriotism, for instance, we find Tolkien explaining carefully why it was that he took a degree in wartime. He had to have his degree: he was engaged to marry; in the future he would have to support a wife. The trouble was "in those days chaps joined up, or were scorned publicly". Tolkien had to take the scorn, and did so for a whole eleven months, till he "produced a First in Finals in 1915. Bolted into the army: July 1915". One wonders how this attitude would have appeared to the Vietnam-era fans of *The Lord of the Rings*: on his side Tolkien shows no sign of ever having heard of Vietnam (though his last letter is dated August 29, 1973). While the man possible odds. It is Aunt Madge who takes Helena in hand, dresses her in clothes that make her a laughing stock to her schoolfriends, and teaches her outlandish customs like changing one's shoes before going into the garden, not sleeping in one's clothes, not spitting on the floor or not picking one's teeth at table.

Much the same could be said about sex. There is little of it in *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, or *The Silmarillion* - just one case of imagined and technical incest from which all recoil - and not much quoted, to Tolkien's son Michael, does try to explain the dangers of love, as Tolkien saw them, and does so with a surprising blend of clear-sightedness and exclusion. Many of the things a modern father might write about - if he had the face to write at all - are simply not there, while there is a very plain statement that the sexes are different, woman being "instinctively, when uncourt, monogamous". These four words seem (to "New Western man") to form one of the smallest circles ever written, since any sign of "instinctive" behaviour will clearly be characterized by their author as "corrupt", and so not contrary evidence. However, behind that there is a lot of horse-sense. Men can wait, but women can't; youth is too precious to mothers "really means economic subservience to male commercial employers". The interests of the sexes are on the whole opposed. All this

## A philologist in purgatory

By T. A. Shippey

may well rasp on modern nerves, both because it sounds so harsh and because the absence of overt sexual reaction may be equated with lack of toughness, lack of virility. However, the mix of hard and soft was successful for a very long time. For all the lady's bounciness of breast in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the hero to whom she offers herself (in my reading and I think Tolkien's) never feels the temptation of lust at all.

But then if he had, neither he nor the poet, nor Tolkien as editor, would have mentioned it. Some things are not said - were not said. The *Letters* show that Tolkien all his life subscribed to the old convention by which you addressed someone as "Dear Mr X", but then on growing familiarity or friendship went over to "Dear X". Christian names were very rare indeed. Similarly, there is as far as I can see no case of profanity in the whole 463 pages; with one exception. Adolf Hitler did anger Tolkien so far as to be called "inddy" - to be specific, "that ruddy little ignominious". It is typical (and like the other things mentioned in the last few paragraphs, superficially provocative) that what should have irritated Tolkien about Hitler was his scholarship. It should be mentioned also - since Tolkien has been accused of racism - that in 1938 he wrote a fairly incandescent letter to a prospective German publisher who asked him if he was "of aryan origin"; he regretted not being Jewish, which is as close as Tolkien ever came to apostatizing his religion.

And yet for all that Hitler and "the Aryans" could do, for all his patriotism and instinct towards instant volunteering, Tolkien through all his Second World War letters to his sons on anti-service never managed to work up any dislike of the Germans of the *Delenda est Carthago* style. It was self-evident, to him, that there were orcs on both sides. The wise man simply opposed them; and that included avoiding or-talk, or - if it had to be brought in, as it did in *The Lord of the Rings* here and there - bowdlerizing it. Using rude words to avoid being thought nabby-pamby would be mere moral cowardice.

Tolkien's prejudices, as revealed in these *Letters*, were cohesive, and cogent, and, further, more necessary to reason (and so less prejudiced) than a good many of those which have taken their place. However, they were once upon a time common. They show him only, like Lewis, as a specimen. One is bound to inquire whether these letters show anything of Tolkien as an individual, and in particular as the remarkably peculiar individual who wrote the most against-the-trend success of several decades, seemingly without progenitor. Here the answers are more puzzling. Tolkien explained himself often enough, and with great clarity; but the clarity depends on knowledge in the questioner which often isn't there. By the end of his life he had all too obviously given up, and concluded a lifetime of lecturing with short notes and soft answers. Can anything be made now of what he said about his own mind and method?

The most revealing remark in the book is in a letter of 1958 to his son Christopher. The latter had just read a paper at St Anne's College, Oxford, on "Baburism and Chitren", his subject being "the history of northern legend as seen in different fashion by Germanic poets and Roman writers". Excellent, said his father, several people "spoke to me of the art with which you made the head-eyed Attila on his couch almost vividly present. Yet oddly, I find the thing that really thrills my nerves is the one you mentioned casually: *Attila*. Without those syllables the whole great drama both of history and legend loses savour for me". This is quite a tongue-in-cheek view of the Fall of the Roman Empire as seen in the Third Reich, a failure of philology. But that clearly is the way Tolkien's mind worked, and it has a kind of compulsion.

The point is that Attila, like his Huns a byword for mindless ferocity, appears to bear a name of suitable alienness derived from the steppes whence he came. However, as Germanic philologists realized suddenly and to their horror, it might well not even be Hunnish at all, but perfectly good Gothic: *Attila* is the Gothic word for "father", and *Attila* is a normal diminutive, "little father, daddy". The name and the reputation seem poles apart. Furthermore, the *Goths* were the people the Huns defeated and expelled and drove west, only to turn and revenge themselves in the Battle of the Catnapian Plains where their king (like Tolkien's Théoden) was trampled in victory by his own cavalry charge. What were they doing calling some "head-eyed" horse-archer "daddy"?

The answer is a complex one. Obviously some Goths changed sides. To them Attila, for all his ferocity, must have seemed a good master, a ring-giver, a provider of loot. This also explains the double tradition of Germanic legend, in part of which (like the Old Norse *Athla*, which "Atli" appears as a traitor and tyrant, while other parts like the Middle High German *Niflungensage* retain a soft spot for him). The different circumstances of origin, and, even more exciting, at the lost times in between, the loyal filtering their way through the forests of Germany and the "pathless Mirkwood" to Scandinavia, the tales exchanged, perhaps, between men of the Crimean Gothic survivor-kingdom and the Vrangian Guards in Constantinople. But all these vistas of age and loss and memory rest on a pin-point: on *Attila*. That is the way Tolkien saw things all his life. In the letter just quoted he says, "I am sure with absolute truth, that if you wanted to know what *The Lord of the Rings* was 'about', it was 'an effort to create a situation in which a common greeting would be *elen sîn ilúmen* 'onwelcme'". It is an attitude more or less immune to literary criticism, but neither inexplicable nor unshared.

The best bits of these *Letters* are accordingly those where Tolkien writes about language, especially about phonology and about semantic change. Sometimes he concentrates on English, discussing with one correspondent the reasons why "giddy" and "dizzy" are related to "god" and "deus". Sometimes he comments on his own invented languages, translating previously inexplicable bits, explaining why he wanted Quenya to have

the feel of Finnish and Sindarin the latter - as the contrast between Welsh. On at least one occasion he turns briskly to attacks on his own style as archaic, and with scornful ease rewrites a speech from Théoden in perfect demotic English. Does that sound better, he inquires? Of course not. It comes out deeply false and hypocritical, "an insincerity of thought, a disunion of word and meaning. For a King who spoke in a modern style would not really think in such terms at all, and any reference to sleeping peacefully in his grave would be a deliberate occasion of expression on his part (however worded) far more bogus than the actual 'archaic' English that I have used". Style confines meaning. If you want to get outside the surprisingly small area of approved modern thoughts, the "hottle" of social conditioning, you will have to write some other way. Tolkien knew that what he was doing was artificial - all his fiction, as he said, would have been better in Elvish - but he trusted to his ear and his special knowledge. Complaints about his style, one sees, may be justified; but they have mostly been deeply ignorant.

The comic thread running through this collection comes indeed from Tolkien's outburst of disbelief at the age at the awful rubbish thrust at him by translators, adapters, cartoon-makers and the BBC. How could anyone conceivably translate "Mountains of Lune" into "Mannabergen" (Swedish for "Moon Mountain"). Lune is French for "moon", but that's French not English. Did they think the Vale of Lune was in Picardy? Why have the orcs (in a cartoon) got beaks and feathers? Are they thinking of *ants*? What is a Christmas tree doing on the front of *The Hobbit*? Tolkien obviously thought, sometimes, that he had died and been condemned to

a purgatorial madhouse. The truth of the matter - as the contrast between his fiction and the criticism of it reveals - is that in the Anglo-Saxon world awareness of language has never been strong and grew inconceivably weaker during his lifetime. It has produced the present situation where people with good English de-grees are more likely to know nothing about words than are (Tolkien's example) postmen, especially Welsh postmen.

This awareness clearly grew on Tolkien with the years, especially after the publication of *The Lord of the Rings*. Much of his correspondence after that shows him trying, often vainly, to find simpler or more thorough ways of saying what he had said already. He did not always post what he had written, no doubt reflecting "there's none so deaf as those that will not hear". He was also strongly aware of the dangers of trying to explain what was *meant* by a work of art, though he did try it from time to time. Some of his remarks would not have occurred to me: that Bombadil, for example, is an exemplar of "the spirit that desires knowledge of other things... because they are *other*". Some of them I find hard to believe for instance that *The Lord of the Rings* is not about power - he changed his mind over this - but about death and immortality. And there is not a lot of information to be gleaned from these pages about *The Silmarillion* as it was finally supposed to be.

On *The Lord of the Rings*, though, there is a good deal of explanation which admirers will find useful. The pessimism, or perhaps better, the awareness of sacrifice in the story is pointed out in a letter after letters: Tolkien was clearly nettled by Edwin Muir's assertion in a review that everyone recovered at the end and

## JOAN OF ARC The Image of Female Heroism Marina Warner

Shows brilliantly how Joan fits into the intellectual and emotional tradition of European thought concerning women

'A work outstanding for its ambition and earnestness. Whereas most recent studies of St Joan have tended to focus on the political aspects of her career, Mrs Warner is the first writer to choose an overtly psycho-historical approach... a first-rate iconographic and literary history'  
- New York Times Book Review  
On sale now £9.95

Weidenfeld & Nicolson

## Present Past

This jasmine tea we brought in lilac tin  
He glanced at - let her set on oak chest top -  
With dried lizard eye - below the Thincroto,  
Saigneur to our self, remote, a count indeed,  
And listened bored to a language he could not  
Would not  
Understand,  
Contemplating life in a remote Angola mill,  
Ancestral glories when Medel sawed,  
The indignation caused by best Asam  
As the dark hours passed  
Ponderous, alone.

Thomas Hinde



Lorien returned to its "ageless felicity", when anyone who read the story at all could see that its inhabitants had condemned their own race and ambitions to death. So, Tolkien repeatedly pointed out that Frodo and Bilbo were not taken overseas to immortality, but to see if they could be cured before they died; that Frodo "apostatized", even "ratted" in the Sammath Naur, though no one should blame him without recalling the Lord's Prayer, "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"; that Gollum tried to repent, only to be stopped, unwittingly and unintentionally, by Sam. His readers were (often) too soft, Tolkien thought. They wanted to be assured that Right was mightier than Might, and they thought he'd said so when he hadn't. On the other side adherents of modern literature often looked to him like defeatists. Right wasn't going to win if they were prepared to ditch it and the "realistic" instead. Between these alternatives "Old Western man" inched along the tightrope, trying to be "cheerful" and "sad" at once (Tolkien knew the history of these words), trying to win wars but not hate Germans, explaining things for the hundredth time and being called "professorial". "A great life", as they say, "if you don't weaken".

There are other *lemonier* in this collection, like the predictable and Bumbadil-like fascination with natural objects, lengthily described - horrosts, mountains, trees, daisies - or the strange difficulties Tolkien experienced in getting things finished off. From a very early period he was apologizing for missed deadlines, and several of the things he promised have never come out at all (all the

work on the *Ancient Riddle*, for one). But the overall picture that emerges is the same as the fiction. Tolkien meant what he wrote deeply. In the end he did not think that he wrote it, not all by himself, and he was very pleased when someone told him so. He also thought that the completely unexpected success of his work showed that even at his least untrained ears, were not deaf after all. Maybe philology would not stay on the academic scrapheap, and maybe the beliefs of "the rat-land of the Shire" and "the downfallen West" were no denser than the Voice of Smurron found.

It is hard for a later generation to be so sanguine - Samsons can look back "in calm of mind, all passion spent", but Davids squaring up to Goliaths probably find it harder - but at any rate one can hope. Possibly Tolkien's subject may revive, lose its taint of strabism, achieve that "neighbourliness of linguistic and literary studies" which he thought could never be forfeited "without loss to both". Possibly that dissident's sensibility which Tolkien and Lewis placed in their own youth and scribbled to the ear, the radio, the aeroplane and the machine-gun may lose its compulsion. At any rate the *Letters* here collected and selected by Humphrey Carpenter give one not just the record of a personality, but the record of a personality thinking and brooding over material which it understood incomparably well and which it genuinely believed much more interesting and important than itself. Tolkien was a modest man. Also - and this is the surprise of the *Letters* an extrovert, for all his decades of silence and preparation.

## Imagination in isolation

By Peter Bland

CHARLES BRASCH: *The Universal Dance*. A Selection from the Critical Prose Writings. Edited by J. L. Watson. 232pp. Dunedin: University of Otago Press, \$25NZ. 0 908569 26 2

Charles Brasch's critical influence on New Zealand writing made itself felt mainly through his editing of the quarterly magazine *Landfall* from 1947 to 1966. *Landfall* is still going strong under the editorship of Peter Smart, and remains - along with Robin Dudding's *Islands* - the most substantial of the local literary magazines.

For many younger writers Brasch was a hard man to get to know, but his generosity - in time and money - was overwhelming. He felt himself isolated (in an already isolated country) by both his intellect and his material good fortune, and his emotional reticence was perhaps a form of self-protection, a way of "being fair" to the legions of budding "talents" seeking sponsorship and approval. This same distancing is noticeable in his prose. He remains, at all times, dedicated to the highest ideals of artistic endeavour. Unfortunately in a developing literature, a lot of otherwise energetic writing falls well below such standards, and the increasing complexity of sorting out the "ideal" from what might appear to be merely pragmatic resulted in growing tensions in Brasch's thinking. His early 1950s judgments (excellent notes on Sargison and the painter Colin McCahon) seem generally better than his later appreciations of the growing American influence on New Zealand letters. His tastes are distinctly "classical" and his tone, as J. L. Watson points out, "is controlled and temperate with a certain high seriousness". To read his prose is to be reminded of critics like Shelley, Arnold and Eliot. Watson warns us that "These great names might seem to deflate Brasch ... but they do, in the end, seem appropriate because they remind us of his breadth of learning and closeness to the central tradition of English letters".

Watson has done an excellent job in bringing together the best of Brasch's critical writing, including his *Landfall* notes, his fine essay on the creative act, *Prose-Company*, and several previously unpublished talks well worth saving.

Two main themes recur: first, Brasch's obsession (it amounts to that) with the creative act itself - "The Universal Dance" of the book's title; and, second, his wealthfulness for anything truly indigenous that might appear on the New Zealand literary scene. He saw New Zealanders as "children of the western world" who, because of their isolation, had to make "a proportionally greater imaginative effort to realize why men overseas are thinking as they are". He recognizes that the greatest danger to the creative process in New Zealand is "the pressure to conform, socially and intellectually ... We are afraid of being different". He sees in the "cobbers and pals" syndrome a superficial tendency to "display our bodies freely" while at the same time keeping a closed mind.

There's something of the puritan at work in this thinking. (He hits out at James K. Baxter for the latter's rather flashy sexual innuendo in his *Pig Island Letters*). It isn't, of course, always necessary to be suspicious of the flesh while berating a closed mind. He undervalues the informality and lack of class-consciousness in many aspects of New Zealand society. In his tremendous concern for literary standards, he criticizes universities for allowing English degrees to be taken without a foreign language, but there have been several bright, underprivileged "pommies" who were grateful for the opportunity to pursue their interests unhindered by such restrictions. Still, one of the great merits of this book is the opportunity it gives us to continue arguing with Brasch over such issues.

As J. L. Watson acutely points out, Brasch's own poetry was rarely "a dance". It had other more austere and lonely qualities. But in his view of the creative act as the ultimate and highest means of human communication, Brasch took his own thinking beyond the merely parochial. A final word of thanks is due to the University of Otago Press: this is a well-made book, solid, well edited, and a pleasure to handle.

## Notes of enjoyment

By Anthony Burgess

PHILIP HOPE-WALLACE: *Words and Music*. 280pp. Collins. £9.95.

On his sixtieth birthday, as C. V. Wedgwood reminds us, a plaque was put up in honour of Philip Hope-Wallace in El Vino's in Fleet Street, a journalist's boozer he graced with his casual eloquence and wit. He was one of those rare writers who write as they speak; his opera and theatre notices were delivered over the telephone and, in the following morning's paper, they appeared as palpable records of a tone of voice. He was best when not too much breath was required, and he never thought of writing a book. Two years after his death his sister has collected some of his pieces - a very small number when you consider that he wrote regularly for more than forty years - and the record is now a kind of LP album of those admired and loved tonalities no longer limited to an inch or an hour.

Having just finished the three recently published volumes of Shaw's music criticism, reviewing by the foot rather than the inch, I am drawn both to commiserate with and to admire journalists like Hope-Wallace, forced into mean compression and yet discovering an art in short-windedness. To be epigrammatically dismissive, like Dorothy Parker with "The Horse Beautiful is the play lousy", is unworthy. Moreover, there was little acid in Hope-Wallace, and his forte, rather like that of Tynan, was finding a crisp poetry of adulation. Writing of Britten's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, he says: "The music is never more cerebral than in this: that it seems

detached from the players in the pit". With *Billy Budd* he finds "zeal-light in the music", though, alas, not on the sombre stage. He sums up Gielgud's *Hamlet* thus: "Man, the best possible instrument, is finally unequal to circumstance. What a piece of work is man, and how inadequate". Comparing Gielgud and Olivier as Lear, he says: "Comparisons are odious, but like much that is odious very interesting".

Hope-Wallace was a great man for the flavours of things, especially times and places - a boyhood in Rouen (which turned him into as much a Frenchman as James Agate, though a much nicer one); the reopening of the Royal Opera House in 1946, Paris, the night of the Coronation - but he found the vital atar in the theatre and, after Shaw, was the one journalist who was equally at home with the drama and the opera. He recognized that you could not make a theatrical aesthetic out of studying a text or a score: if a thing worked, in words or music, it was good. The sung and the spoken sets had both to be assessed in those same terms, and he was not one to reject Gounod's *Faust* because it was more kitsch than Goethe (Veronica Wedgwood says: "He was one of the few English critics who really knew his Goethe").

He quotes Beethoven with approval: "I would give the whole of the Brandenburg Concertos for *Manon* and would think I had vastly profited by the exchange". He means Massenet, not Puccini: Puccini did not capture the essential Frenchness of the story. Hope-Wallace stuck to his admiration of Massenet in the face of great British scorn. "... The mere mention of his name in my own country was enough to set the table in a roar; to make lady members of the Bach choir turn pink with disapproval; to induce apoplexy in the

most bloodless cathedral organs". It is bloodlessness that Hope-Wallace is against. He loves the human voice as a kind of exquisite caravaggio, and he worships the great divas. He celebrates Muggie Teyte's eightieth birthday in a fine paragraph:

Jean de Reszke kept her singing *Depuis le jour d'aujourd'hui* (perfect head tone and piaoissina). Debussy couldn't quite believe the sight of her (perhaps he was expecting someone heavier). "Vous êtes bien Mlle Maggie Teyte de l'Opéra Comique?" He pronounced Maggie with soft g's like the Italian soup cubes. Always her sense of humour was tart and droll. During the blitz at one of those National Gallery concerts, with Gerald Moore accompanying, she was shattered the spell of a *Faust* song with the announcement: "Dana. Start again. I swallowed my eyelashes".

As for the art he practised, it was typical of him to deplore the pejorative employment of "criticism" in the otiose speech. "Real criticism is eight per cent adulation, ten per cent cautious disapproval, still less scolding or derision". The days when Shaw could describe a singer ready for "Ocean, thou mighty monster" looking as if she had already swallowed it in the green room, and according to Hope-Wallace, and he says this with a regret perhaps not wholly sincere. His friend was to enjoy, not to espy, and these snippets of genuine criticism (formed but never blurted, coming to the three hundredth *Madame Butterfly*) are instinct with the voice of enjoyment. This is a fine book: he might have been wittily surprised at his having written it.

## The sharp Etonian eye

By Alan Bell

DAVID NEWSOME (Editor): *Edwardian Excursions*. From the Diaries of A. C. Benson 1898-1904. 190pp. John Murray. £12.50. 0 1935 3769 X

David Newsome's *On the Edge of Paradise* gave a full introduction to A. C. Benson's life through his manuscript diary preserved in the library of Magdalene College, Cambridge. He now turns to his earlier volumes for a series of long extracts covering some of Benson's vacation activities during his last years as an Eton master, before he settled in Cambridge as a don and man of letters, devoting his literary talents to the lucrative but undemanding lower-middle reading public and his romantic yearnings to the better-looking youth of the university. The earlier diaries seem oddly timeless (helped by some of Benson's expressions - "sate", "skript", "manufactory") and the selection has the air of a book for the country-house guest-room: it is appropriately insubstantial (and, especially when compared with the 400 larger pages of the *Paradise* book, alarmingly expensive), but it does succeed in giving us some representative passages of Benson at his full length.

His quality as an observer is well brought out, particularly the peculiar social position that he occupied as an upper-middle-class academic, enabled by his Etonian and archiepiscopal connections to move freely in aristocratic and Court circles - and finding himself more attracted to them than he usually liked to admit, even when commenting on their stuffiness, philistinism and formality.

His eye was sharp, and during this early period his pen was being sharpened by practice with telling: sometimes rather too easy; sometimes that were to characterize his later journalizing at Cambridge. Eating an

overlarge peach was "as if I were biting into a baby's skull". Kempe's stained glass depicts "imbit-ficed people in carpets, and angels with ragged wings"; another don, met in Court circles, is "like a damaged 'Dickens'". He is able to give subliminal glimpses of his subjects, like the flash of the peeresses' mirrors checking the fit of their coronets at the coronation of Edward VII. It was there that he noticed their husbands:

It was now exactly like the garden-party in *Alice in Wonderland* - the business-like peers had gone, but the rest evidently yielded to the irresistible desire to prance and pace around in their magnificent cent, revealing admiration in each other's eyes. The coronets were truly absurd - so big, like battered *hobs* and so unreal looking. The peers who took them off looked well.

State occasions, such as the Coronation, Gladstone's funeral, or a visit to the Vice-Regal Lodge at Dublin (where Benson found himself at a disadvantage, having taken a Hamburg and not a top hat) occupy about half the book; they are observed with a shade less disrespect than Benson perhaps wished to convey. A Christmas party at Claremont with his former pupil the Duke of Albany (newly of Coburg), and the dreary Germanic horseplay ("the old fondness that Royalty have for regaling other people and laughing at their discomfort, when they are sure they will never be taken to look foolish themselves") is recorded in detail; but he decides that the "atmosphere of false deference and elaborate ceremony" is not for him.

Better, perhaps, were the long, idyllic trips in summer vacations, to Cambridge, Norfolk or Gloucestershire (where Broadway became the Upton of his *Letters*), redolent of Norfolk jacket, knickerbocker breeches and bicycle - or later of the motor-car, and the not unwelcome attention the hissing and snorting new carriage attracted in country towns. There was church-visiting, but

never in it merely archeological. M. R. James-ish ways: places were to be appreciated for their human associations. "This barnacle-like heretage of human interest is what gives such a place its catholicity of charm". Benson noted at Ely, and "intelligently, combined with beauty-mellow mouldering age" was much desired, often producing a hyperaesthetic rhapsody that is very much of its period. Charm in individuals and his special appeal for him, and A. J. Ballou is well portrayed in his domestic surroundings at Whittingham.

Literary judgments are delivered with the smart briskness of a chess schoolmaster rather than the more considered finality of Benson's later critical manner. The exception here is the long account of a visit to Swinburne. Interviewed while Benson was working on the English *Man of Letters* series, it is already known from Percy Lubbock's earlier and more circumspect selection from the Diary, but it well deserved publication. Every detail of the *French ménage* is recorded, and - as one might expect - it is *Witt* Danton who steals the show:

I can't understand this enthusiasm for this egotistical, ill-bred, little man can have established such relations with Rossetti and Swinburne. There must be something fine about him, and his extraordinary kindness is perhaps the result of his talk, his personal life, his (dripping mustache etc) and his egotism would grate on me at every hour of the day. And yet he is a hero of friendship and love.

From a strictly military point of view these campaigns were flashes in the pan, Joan was a mediocre strategist and her sole notion of tactics was to charge head-on. When she freed herself of the tutelage of Charles's professional generals and moved from the rear to the van, the results were not impressive. She attempted to storm Paris on Our Lady's birthday, a shocking sacrilege and a military failure. Left by a penitence to Charles VII to her own devices she

MARINA WARNER:

Joan of Arc  
The Image of Female Heroism  
349pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £9.95.  
0 297 77638 X

The medieval Church distrusted visionaries, with reason. Receiving their revelations directly from God they challenged the traditional lines of authority. And they presented intractable problems of recognition. Charlatans and fanatics were not easily distinguished from men inspired; then, if they were indeed inspired, was it by God? When the line was separated heresy from enthusiasm was so narrow, there were bound to be many who, like Francis of Assisi, were venerated as saints but might quite as easily have been condemned as heretics. Joan of Arc fell on the other side of the line, and has the unique distinction of being the only saint whom the Catholic Church has both burned and canonized.

The career by which she earned this distinction began with her arrival at the Dauphin's court at Chinon in February 1429 to announce that she was sent by God to relieve Orléans (then besieged by an English army) and to lead the Dauphin to his coronation at Rheims. That she obtained an audience was certainly remarkable, although it was not miraculous as some of her admirers have suggested. Joan was more than a simple peasant. She was the daughter of a substantial tenant farmer at the margins of Champagne, and she was above minding the beasts in the fields as she made quite clear to the interrogators at her trial. She could dictate, although not write, a good letter. She came with an introduction from the commander of the royal castle at Vaucouleurs near her home. And she had a self-confidence which compelled belief.

The Dauphin was just the man to believe her. Charles VII was a man of intense, brooding piety whose own interest in occult prophecy earned him polite rebukes from senior clergymen at his court. Joan was at least as plausible as some of the astrologers, prognosticators and quacks whom Charles kept about him and whom, says the Burgundian chronicler Chastellain, he "often consulted and firmly believed". The principal accusation against Joan at her trial, that she had set herself up as a prophet, was undoubtedly true and was probably what commended her to the Dauphin. Prophecies of the salvation of France by a virgin had been current for a number of years. Joan had certainly heard of them, and probably Charles had too. Other visionaries with very similar messages had gained the Dauphin's ear by very similar means, and one of the most famous, a shepherd from Gevaudan called William, was to displace Joan in his esteem within months of his coronation. These eccentrics and maliffs differed from Joan only in being failures.

What was remarkable about Joan was not that she was a prophet, nor that her prophecies gained an audience in the peculiar atmosphere of early fifteenth-century France. It was that the more significant of her predictions came true. In May 1429, Orléans was duly relieved. In July the Dauphin was crowned at Rheims after a short campaign in which the English army, commanded by Talbot and Fastolf, had been defeated in the field for the first time in recent memory.

From a strictly military point of view these campaigns were flashes in the pan, Joan was a mediocre strategist and her sole notion of tactics was to charge head-on. When she freed herself of the tutelage of Charles's professional generals and moved from the rear to the van, the results were not impressive. She attempted to storm Paris on Our Lady's birthday, a shocking sacrilege and a military failure. Left by a penitence to Charles VII to her own devices she

## Marching with the Maid

By Jonathan Sumption

Joan of Arc  
The Image of Female Heroism  
349pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £9.95.  
0 297 77638 X

The significance of Joan's brief career was psychological, not military. It brought to an end an almost unbroken run of English victories which had begun at Agincourt in 1415. In contemporary eyes these victories were the best possible evidence of divine favour. The disinclination of the Dauphin by his father in favour of Henry V and his heirs had plainly been justified in retrospect, even if it was not justified by the Dauphin's implication in the murder of the Duke of Burgundy on the bridge of Montereau in 1419. Although French historians generally deny it, there is little doubt that in the large part of France which Henry V controlled his rule enjoyed the support of most of the population, and so, at first, did the nominal rule by his infant son. Of the 131 members of the tribunal which condemned Joan of Arc, only eight were Englishmen and of these only two were regular participants.

Without this support the task of Henry VI's government in ruling an alien kingdom would have been impossible, and indeed after Joan's adventure it gradually became impossible. The Duke of Bedford, who ruled in Henry's name, knew this well. Much later, when the territorial losses of the English in 1429 had been largely made good, he reported to the home government that there had fallen at Orléans

... as it seemed a great stroke upon your people that was assembled there in great number, caused in part as I row of lack of sad belief and unfaithful doubt that they had of a disciple and limb of the fiend called the Pucelle that used false enchantments and sorcery, the which great stroke and discomfiture not only lessened in great part the number of your people there but also withdrew the courage of the remnant in marvelous wise and encouraged your adverse party and enemies to assemble them forthwith in great number.

Joan could have been looked up as a prisoner of war, quietly disposed of in a secular prison, or thrown into the Seine in a sack like William the Shapherd when the English finally caught him too. She was tried for heresy and sorcery by an ecclesiastical tribunal because it was necessary to show that her victories were the work of Satan, not of God.

In this sense the condemnation of Joan of Arc was a political act. But it was not a political tribunal which pronounced it. When all life was in the framework of religious belief, eccentricity and nonconformity were apt to seem impious even when they were harmless, which Joan's were not. Her career had been extraordinary. Her opinions were unconventional. On some matters, such as the authority of the Church which she rejected in principle, they were plainly heretical. Joan gave her judges plenty of material with which to destroy her, and at least one of them stoutly maintained twenty years later when he was living in a reunited French kingdom that Joan had been a fraud. She was "subtle, with a woman's subtlety".

This tells us as much about Joan's judges as it does about Joan herself: their ideas about what behaviour was seemly, and what was so eccentric as to lie outside the pale of shared values which defined a Christian community in the opinion of educated Frenchmen in the fifteenth century. And not only those of them who supported the cause of Henry VI. Prophecy was dangerously close to sorcery and the authority of the Church mattered on both sides of the political boundary. The guidance of "unprompted visions" might be sought in an emergency, but they were not the means of recovery in the longer term. Regnault de Char-

ties, the archbishop of Rheims who crowned Charles in Joan's presence in 1429, was certainly not the only dignitary on Charles's side who thought the Maid presumptuous and misguided even if she was also useful. God suffered her to be captured, he told his diocesan, for her overweening pride and her obstinacy in following her own will in place of God's commands. This was almost certainly one reason why Charles VII made no attempt to ransom or release her.

Joan's own personality cannot now be retrieved from the glutinous varnish of five centuries of hagiography. Even her own words, recorded more or less verbatim in a substantial volume of transcripts of her cross-examination at Rouen, reflect the questions which were put to her, and therefore the preconceived notions of her interrogators. What can be retrieved is the image which Joan left with her contemporaries. Since she had prevailed by bluff in her lifetime (and, a cynic might add, after her death), the image was perhaps more important than the reality.

It is the image which is the subject of Marina Warner's interesting but eccentric book. Those who want to know the order of events will have to consult the rather sketchy chronological table at the beginning of the text or, for want of anything better, the orthodox biography by Regine Pernoud. Here they will discover why Joan was admired and why she was rejected; in particular (the author's words) "how Joan fitted into an intellectual and emotional tradition of thought concerning women".

In the second half of her book Miss Warner traces the secular and religious cult of Joan of Arc through five centuries in which enthusiasm for a variety of causes have claimed Joan of Arc for their own: French nationalists, anti-Semites, right-wing nationalists, agrarian socialists, Catholic revivalists. The process has always involved an element of anachronism, and in claiming Joan for the feminist movement Miss Warner follows in the same tradition. Feminist history is open to the same objections as patriotic history. Marxist history, or indeed history written under the impulse of any single-held code of belief, it simplifies and distorts by questionable principles of selection. At least in Miss Warner's case the principles of selection are overt and allowance can be made for them. Besides, Joan's femaleness matters.

One can only speculate about what would have happened if she had been a man. It seems unlikely that she would have been put to death and almost certain that she would have been spared a lengthy trial by the inquisition beforehand. If a man, even one inspired by the conviction of a divine revelation, had had a comparable career, his victories could have been explained by luck or military skill and his work undone with the aid of a few reinforcements and a Parliamentary subsidy. His achievement, falling naturally into the accepted scheme of things, could have been rationally discussed without reference to the miraculous intervention of either God or Satan. But as Bossuet once observed, God acts through the most unlikely agents so that his own role may be recognized. This was indeed exactly what the Duke of Bedford feared, Joan was condemned because, being a woman, she was an unlikely agent for the defeat of the English armies. That she was a woman was the essence of the matter for her enemies as it was for her friends.

That being so, it is ironic that Joan herself should have abjured her femaleness. Christine de Pisan might proclaim her victories as triumphs of the female sex but Joan would have rejected that notion as, incidentally, she would have rejected the subtlety of this book. She was the image of a wholly sexless heroism.

There was, first, her virginity, the one aspect of her personal history which she publicized widely. "La

Pucelle" was a name which she gave herself, and attempts to discredit it failed. The accusation of dissoluteness, freely made in English and Burgundian propaganda, does not appear in the condemnation of 1431 and was not pressed at the trial. Although described as pretty, she was clearly not feminine. She was a virago. Several witnesses who gave evidence at her posthumous retrial in the 1450s remarked on a forbidding manner which repelled any kind of sexual attraction. Her equerry said:

Although she was a pretty and shapely young girl, and although in arming her he had often seen her breasts and occasionally her legs naked ... he had never experienced the slightest carnal desire for her and neither had any of her other equerries or servants as he had often heard them say so.

Some of these things gave the same evidence in their own words.

Duc allowance must be made for the traditional stereotypes of the medieval cult of saints, which expected sexlessness both in men and women. Both Joan herself at the time and the witnesses at the posthumous retrial twenty-five years later must have been influenced by powerful conventional notions about what made a pure life. More interesting, because it involved a striking departure from the stereotype, was Joan's adoption of male costume.

As Miss Warner points out, this was not wholly unprecedented, but she exaggerates the importance of the precedents. They were few, ancient, and concerned fictional saints whose cult was very limited. Moreover, the rejection of female costume by such female paragons as Thecla in the apocryphal second-century *Acts of Saint Paul* involved (as Miss Warner also points out) rejection of the luxury and comfort associated with a woman's clothing and hair-style. Joan, by comparison, wore male clothes of great magnificence including the splendid surcoat by which she was caught at Compiègne.

This was profoundly shocking for her contemporaries. It features in no less than five of the charges brought against Joan at her trial and aroused misgivings among her most ardent supporters. Even without the stern injunctions of the Book of Deuteronomy ("the woman shall not wear that which pertaineth to a man ... for all that do so are abomination"), Joan would have been condemned by the strength of social convention which regarded male costume on a woman as indecent, however concealing it might be. Do we not still regard male transvestism in the same light?

More difficult to understand is Joan's own determined attachment to her male clothes. That she should

have worn them in battle is unsurprising. But she also wore them for the journey to Chinon in February 1429 and throughout her imprisonment after May 1430. Indeed, she declined an offer to allow her to hear Mass in prison if she resumed a woman's dress. "She had rather die than go back on something that had been done at God's command." "Through her transvestism," Miss Warner suggests, "she abrogated the destiny of womanhood. She could thereby transcend her sex: she could set herself apart and usurp the privileges of the male and his claims to superiority."

If Miss Warner were right in her view that "the issues of feminism were alive in the fifteenth century as they never were again until the late eighteenth century and the present day", there might be something to be said for the view that Joan was venturing those issues at her trial: although not much when one remembers the backwardness of an upbringing at the far end of Champagne. But the truth is that the dominant position of men was not even questioned in the fifteenth century, and the only evidence which is offered to the contrary is the defence of womanhood by Christine de Pisan and Jean Gerson against the cheapening effect of erotic literature of the period. This is as far from women's liberation as Mary Whitehouse is from Germaine Greer.

That Joan's superiors and judges were men was too obvious and too natural a fact for Joan to contemplate demonstrating against it, and nothing in her career suggests any reason why she should wish to. On the road to Chinon her costume was presumably play-acting. In Rouen castle it was the only remaining symbol of her brief period of glory, her "splendour" as Miss Warner puts it. In a woman as proud of her achievement and as certain of its spiritual meaning as Joan was, this was enough to justify her refusal to discard it.

It is now sixty years too late to point out that this serene confidence that she was sent by God was merely the result of Joan's achievement as the cause of them, and that her belief in her "voices" was quite as effective as the reality of them. She was canonized in 1920 after a relentless campaign by the French ecclesiastical hierarchy which was as political in its inspiration as her trial and execution. The Devil's Advocate had pointed out that not all greatness came from God. Joan, he concluded, was one of those who, like Christopher Columbus, had done remarkable things but it was far from clear that she had done them in God's name. A Protestant Englishman may properly agree.

### TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

The following special numbers are planned for autumn 1981.

FRANKFURT I October 9th

FRANKFURT II October 16th

JAPAN  
October 30th

For further details relating to advertising in these important forthcoming features, please contact Christopher Lorne on - 01-837 1234 Extn. 7736 or 7754.



# Remorselessly revealing

By Phyllis Grosskurth

ANNE WHITMARSH:  
Simone de Beauvoir and the Limits of  
Commitment  
212pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£14.50.  
0 521 22750 X

Since Sartre's death in April, 1980, Simone de Beauvoir has lived in lonely seclusion. No longer does she have to flee from the inopportune press as she did after winning the Prix Goncourt in 1954. At that time a friend expostulated with her that since she was not news the reporters were only doing their job. She was ready with an answer:

Agreed: I have nothing against them: some of my best friends are journalists - I just don't like the newspapers they work for. Furthermore, with the best will in the world, or the worst, publicity disfigures those who fall into its hands. In my view, the relation a writer enters into with the truth makes it impossible for him to acquiesce to such treatment: it is quite enough that it should be inflicted upon one.

To what degree she was being sincere - speaking in good faith - is almost impossible to judge. For years, as high priestess of existentialism, she was the centre of world attention. In a subsequent wave of revulsion, during the past few years she has been attacked as hypocritical and hedonistic, and these attacks must have been particularly bitter to endure since the most strident of them have come from the women's movement in which she regarded herself as the peace-setter. Anne Whitmarsh, in her carefully titled book, *Simone de Beauvoir and the Limits of Commitment*, has tried to present a balanced evaluation of Beauvoir's position but the very wording of her introduction betrays her feelings. She says that she is going to address herself mainly to the "political implications" of Beauvoir's commitment and to the actuality of her espousal of "causes to which she has, or is reputed to have devoted herself." She continues: "It may well be that she has been much influenced by the relative continuity of the restricted milieu of Parisian intellectuals from which she has never detached herself." The use of the subjunctive here is a transparent device for masking Anne Whitmarsh's own scepticism about Beauvoir's wider impact. "Within this closed circle," Sartre was intellectually the dominant figure.

There we have the situation: Sartre was the elaborator of a philosophy that emerged from an intellectual elite, and Whitmarsh doubts whether "engagement" was anything more than a parlour-game for a select group of intellectuals whose pretensions to the sublime were interpreted as profoundity. She never forgave the bourgeoisie. How seriously is one to take this statement when it is never made clear why Beauvoir could never forgive her class if she managed to throw off its shackles? She escaped a middle-class marriage, she found self-fulfilment through her writing, and she was involved in the most highly publicized intellectual movement of her time. What more did she want? A few pages later, Whitmarsh writes: "From earliest childhood Simone de Beauvoir dedicated herself to the pursuit of happiness." But behind splendour and defiance, she found herself impaled upon the horns of a dilemma of her own making.

One longs for some discussion of her personal predicament. Whitmarsh gives a cool account of the various historical events which impinged on Sartre and de Beauvoir and of the indignation the two felt at the plight of the Spanish Republic, at Soviet slave-labour camps, at French atrocities in Algeria, the Suez debacle. They lived in a world of cruelty and injustice, a world in which Paul Nizan (who would not discuss politics with them) was killed, and Simone Weil died of tuberculosis in England, having deliberately gone hungry to show solidarity with starving compatriots in France. What

marsh believes she has maintained fairness by indirect criticism, but by limiting her discussion to theoretical issues, she drains an otherwise excellent book of vitality.

De Beauvoir was entirely complacent in her indifference to politics until Sartre joined her into awareness just before the outbreak of war. But what did this awareness amount to? Intermittent discussions around café-tables. For an accusatory finger to be pointed at Sartre and his consort, one has only to read how they spent the Occupation on holiday or going to endless films which dulled the discomfort of not getting enough to eat. They laughed gaily over Hess's misadventure, but what about their reactions to what was being done to the Jews in their midst?

De Beauvoir convinced many of us that she had discarded the trammels of her class, but perhaps the feminists are right that in the long section of *The Second Sex* entitled "Woman's Life Today," in which she describes her own view of women (purportedly as created through the eyes of The Other), she is describing a creature exactly like Paul in *Les Mandarins*, lacking self-regard, finding fulfilment only in the delight she can arouse in her man, undignified, and terrified of being abandoned. De Beauvoir may demand privacy from the press, but her whole literary endeavour has been directed towards revealing the most private of her wounds. Indeed, she has claimed that her form of commitment has been to reveal herself to her readers. It seems never to have occurred to her that she might cause embarrassment to her readers or pain to her friends by this form of self-indulgence. Her insistence that none of her novels has had a *roman à clef* is too absurd to be entertained.

In a sense, too, her fictions have been "women's" novels of the most flamboyantly emotional sort. She may have regarded herself as rigorously emancipated in her relationship with Sartre but her attitude to the triangle formed with Olga Kosakiewicz, which she fictionalized in *She Came to Stay*, reveals her obsessive anxiety that she might lose her man; in the end, her after-ego in that novel, Françoise, can find no solution to the predicament but to murder her rival. Her four-year liaison with Nelson Algren she exploited after the end of the affair. When a *Time* reporter questioned Algren about it at the time, he replied laconically, "Yeah. I showed her around Chicago." Just how deeply hurt he was by her revelations was shown in a blistering attack he made on her lack of decorum only a week before his death a few months ago. In her introduction to *Force of Circumstance* de Beauvoir says that "it seems to me worthwhile to tell the whole truth about her private life."

Death and ageing have always obsessed her. The ending of *Force of Circumstance* is painful to read: "I loathe my appearance now: the eyebrows slipping down toward my eyes, the bags underneath, the excessive fullness of the cheeks, and that air of sadness around the mouth that wrinkles always bring. Perhaps the people I pass in the streets are merely a woman in her fifties who simply looks her age, no more, no less. But when I look, I see my face as it was, which there is no cure."

This revulsion against the flesh is reminiscent of Rousseau's horrified vision of his putrifying body in *Le Nègre*. "Is this, then, all that the rigorous demands of existentialism have left her with? She herself tells a disarming story against herself. In the early days of the heady new philosophy she was asked whether she was an existentialist. She didn't know what to answer. Was she or wasn't she? In time she confidently assumed the whole ready-made system. But if she believed that existence precedes essence, that she could make herself what she would, did she not realize that she was powerless against the

ravages of time? Has she simply slipped along with the immediate pleasures of life, deluding herself that she was her own triumphant creation so long as she evaded the lonely terrors of the night? Mary McCarthy wrote an acridly accurate description of de Beauvoir's superficial impressions of the United States in "Mlle Gulliver in Amérique"; and it has to be acknowledged, however regretfully, that she has lived above all as Sartre's Bobboey Twin. Her own role has been essentially that of a spectator and recorder. Her commitment, ultimately, was to Sartre and to herself. She never claimed to be "ideologically creative" like him: "This bent forced him into making political choices and going much more profoundly into the reasons for them than I was interested in doing."

Sartre's own commitment is open to question; and de Beauvoir's philosophical position has been little more than a Benthamite self-regarding altruism. Others must be free only in order to sustain one's own freedom: "We need others in order to make our own existence fully justified and necessary." But what if the comforting presence of others is no longer there to support one? Are memories of lively discussions around tables at the Coupole and of adulation from American college-students or exciting holidays sufficient to sustain her in old age?

In *The Prime of Life* de Beauvoir explained that she had to isolate and identify her own brand of femininity. Feminists were enraged by her belief that women did not possess the temperament which made men into explorers, and that she should be content to go along with a man "whom I regarded as my superior." Whether death came first to her or to Sartre, either alternative was unbearable. Who can but pity her as the shadows of night descend?

## Time for transcendence

By J. M. Cocking

MARCEL PROUST:

Correspondence.

Volume VII, 1907

Edited by Philip Kolb

369pp. Paris: Plon.

2 259 00746 5

With hindsight one can see in Proust's letters of 1907 directions that will lead into the great creative phase of the next two years; the pastiches, *Contre Sainte-Beuve* and the first effective distillation of essences for *A la recherche du temps perdu* were to follow in 1908 and 1909. All his biographers have described his isolation in the bedroom of his new flat in the Boulevard Haussmann, soon to be filled with cork. His letters confirm his separation from society and friends, allowing a new detachment in his views and judgments of *mondains* and *mondaines*, though occasionally the old interests reassert themselves and fresh impressions are recorded and stored: ready for use. When he emerges after a prolonged seclusion to his performance of Raymond Proust's *Le Temps retrouvé*, he writes about the visible signs of ageing in his former acquaintance: "Time is passing; the past is now quite past, and losses are irrevocable: 'Si vous êtes surpris de Bertrand (de Fénélon) distillé de ma part de tendres choses, bien vaines. Au-dessus des ruines de mon intimité avec lui pleure souvent ce que Chateaubriand appelle le Génie de l'Amitié et qu'il aurait si bien défini dans une page de son *Le Génie de l'Amitié*.'"

Time is passing; only art can transcend time. This idea, actually quoted in a letter to Georges de Lauroy in 1908, is already here in a letter to unpublised Sartre in 1907. De lauroy writes: "Le parti de nous



Marcel Proust concentrated on lithography at three different periods of his life: in 1906, 1914 and the 1920s. He turned to the medium not only as a diversion from the demands of oil painting but also when he felt he needed to work within its limitations of black and white to help resolve a particular problem he had encountered in his painting. This example, *Le regard blanc* which is taken from *Marcel Proust: Lithographs by Susan Lambert* (71pp. Victoria and Albert Museum/HMSO, £2.95, 0 11 290356 8) was produced in 1929, a year in which he almost completely abandoned painting in favour of sculpture and print-making.

même qui veut, dans les moments où elle vaut, est en dehors du temps." Transcendence is to be achieved through style; and in the letters and writings of 1907 about the poetry of Anna de Noailles Proust is turning round and round the notion of metaphor as the means to preternatural vision, exploring the connections in his own mind between vision, memory and imagination, and approaching conclusions and convictions to be embodied in his fictional artists and their works.

He is also testing out his theoretical conclusions, writing exercises like "Journées de lecture" and "Impressions de route en automobile", both published in *Le Figaro* in 1907. These, like his comments on Anna de Noailles's poems, show how memories, both of real life and of life seen through books and works of art, are combining with new imaginative experiences into the texture that will become the very substance of the world of *A la recherche*. In another piece published in 1907, "Sentiments filiaux d'un parricide," Proust wrote that after his parents' death he became less himself and more their son, and more interested in their friends than in his own. When he went to Cabourg in the summer of 1907 he was instinctively going back to his past, with thoughts of his mother, and, at the same time, refreshing his imagination with new impressions. He asked Emile Mâle to recommend an "hôtesse, soit d'art, soit de nature, soit d'histoire, soit de légendes... des choses frappantes pour l'imagination... The first results were written into "Impressions de route en automobile".

These hints of things to come, hitherto dispersed among various kinds of evidence and not universally recognized, are brought together in this new edition of the correspondence as never before. Philip Kolb, in his introduction, picks out the interesting points. He also comments penetratingly and amusingly on the exchange between Proust and de lauroy, for here, in 1907, the letters from Montesquieu, the letters from Montes-

quieu in the University of Illinois collection are printed for the first time, so that one no longer has to guess what Montesquieu wrote from Proust's replies. "Cependant j'ai pu me persuader que vous êtes, le se dis pas: le melséle imaginatif, mais le valdudimurich cichainé, dans la sens des comtes de fées, et que cet enchantement peut, vo céder devant un philtre ou un rameau, ou un mot." Proust answers that his illness may be nervous in origin, but that his physical effects have gone too far for miracles.

By now Montesquieu's concept and arrogance are so deliberately cultivated that he may seem to be underlining his own positions with a certain amount of humour; sad, on occasions, pathos: "Au revoir, cher Ami. Le sort a décidé que nous ne nous voyons plus. Cela vaut mieux que s'il nous infligeait de ne plus nous aimer, destin de ceux qui ont de la danger des rencontres renouvelées."

Mostly, Montesquieu pursued Proust evades; flattering, like Proust, determined not to be imposed upon. Montesquieu wants Proust to do honour to the tomb of his dearly-loved secretary and companion, Gabriel de Vigny. Proust determinedly takes refuge in his illness. Proust tells Montesquieu that his age must not be held responsible for his "figure plissée et rose de rose mousseuse"; Montesquieu willingly accepts "rose mousseuse" but is doubtful about "plissée". Proust tells him: "Vous vous élevez sur l'histoire, vous ne vous élevez pas sur la préhension comme le goliard sur la temple et vous n'almérez pas; on vous prive de cette préhension, d'admiration." Montesquieu is delighted; later he will quote Proust's sentence in *Le Figaro* effects.

This, like so much else, is recorded in Professor Kolb's edition, which resolve all enigmas and all strands together. Proust's letters, as all strands together, have proved impossible in the past to read, but in this edition, the letters are brought together, and the exchange between Montesquieu and Proust, for here, in 1907, the letters from Montesquieu, the letters from Montes-

## The ordeal of the Church

By Derek Beales

OWEN CHADWICK:  
The Popes and European Revolution  
646pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford  
University Press. £28.  
0 19 826919 6

Historians are often told nowadays that the skills they need most are in computing and statistics. In reality, to lack competence in mathematics is a far less serious weakness for the student of most countries in most periods than to lack understanding of religion. The undergraduate who found Owen Chadwick's *Victorian Church* unpalatable because it contained so many disagreeable technical terms like "episcopal" was revealing his incapacity to grasp essential aspects of nineteenth-century British history. For some earlier ages and less developed societies, the history of Christianity seems scarcely distinguishable from the story of Western civilization. An *Oxford History of the Christian Church*, therefore, is a fine and timely conception. Professor Chadwick, who with his brother Henry Chadwick edits the series, inaugurates it with a volume on Roman Catholicism between about 1700 and about 1830.

The author has, so far as possible, left France out of his account, to enable John McManners to devote a separate volume to it. But the subject remains enormous. In the first place, it straddles the continents. It takes in the Jesuits' rule in Paraguay, their attempts to assimilate Christianity and ancestor-worship in China, and the disputed election of a patriarch for the Maronites of Syria. Within Europe, church architecture provides telling examples that range from Portugal to Transylvania.

Secondly, the variety of topics that could be considered relevant is almost infinite. Church and state, religious and secular, were so interrelated, or so nearly indistinguishable that practically nothing human can be foreign to the ecclesiastical historian. Snuff-taking spices these pages, because it was widespread and gave much offence, so that church authorities had to decide whether it broke a fast or could be permitted in church. Wig-wearing posed similar questions. Much education was in the hands of clergy, including monks and nuns; universities were commonly pleasant refuges for well-connected spinsters rather than centres of sustained study; so a nursery came into being that amounted to a cookery school. The discussion ranges from hermits to hymnody, flagellants to philosophers, the *virtus* of bells to vernacular bible.

Chadwick solves these two problems of scale by the geographical and topical, by a selection that is necessarily somewhat arbitrary. Poland, Hungary and Bohemia receive few mentions. Belgium scarcely figures before or after the peasant war of 1793-99. The emphasis is on Spain, southern Germany, Austria and especially Italy. The prominence of Italy owes something to the accidents that the papal state and the Church's central administration were located there; that all the popes, the great majority of the cardinals and even over half the newly-canonized saints of the eighteenth century were Italian; and that hence much of the surviving evidence, even about other countries, has an Italian flavour.

As for subject-matter, the book does not attempt the weary comprehensiveness of a compendium. Although few aspects are wholly ignored, some obviously important matters receive less attention than they might be thought to deserve. Not much is said about education, about the church as landlord, or the role of church courts in matters now considered secular, like divorce. On the other hand, certain areas are fully treated: the religion of the people, the clergy, their work and organization, monks, nuns, their discipline, the office of the pope, including an invaluable account of the Roman administration, the fall of the Jesuits, the

Catholic Reformers", especially Muratori, Joseph II and Leopold of Tuscany; Revolution and Restoration.

However, the greatest issue raised by the theme is that of approach. "This book," Chadwick writes, "tries to describe the difference made to the papacy by the European Revolution of 1789 to 1815; or, in other words, what Catholicism was like before the deluge and what it was like after, what the continuity and what the differences." He goes on to say that he has "consciously taken a viewpoint further south and further east" than France. This perspective ensures a measure of originality. For the period from Henry IV to Napoleon III, and particularly for the age of Enlightenment and Revolution, historians often come near to equating the history of Europe with that of France. As for concentrating on eighteenth-century Italy, in English the subject hardly exists. One effect of this book will be to put the southern Catholic countries on to the historiographical map of eighteenth-century Europe. It becomes clear too that for Europe outside France (and in some respects Britain and Holland) the radical Enlightenment and the Revolution ranked as alien outgrowth of French zealotry. Voltaire had Italian, Spanish and German Catholic readers, but not followers. The cult of the Supreme Being could not be transplanted out of France.

In fact this book's originality goes much deeper than the author claims. As he says, "Prelates in the age between the Reformation and the Revolution have no high reputation. Not only have historians of France tended to dominate the history of eighteenth-century Europe, but in ecclesiastical matters French philosophers have imposed on subsequent writers their caricature of the Roman Church. Voltaire set himself to destroy the whole 'shameful' edifice. He questioned its rationale, ridiculed its credibility, assailed the good faith of the clergy, and was careful never to be fair to any abbé who might seem to deserve credit for humanitarianism and enlightenment. French anti-clericals have echoed him ever since. Protestants have usually been content with a portrait of the Church as grotesquely rich, corrupt and superstitious. Catholics dislike it for different reasons, as too worldly, secular, rationalistic, Erastian, ready to yield up the Jesuits and papal authority to the whims of princes. David Knowles could hardly bring himself to include the apostles, glories of Melk and Ottobrunen within the true tradition of rule-observing monasticism."

Admittedly, anti-historians have endeavoured to question the Enlightenment no longer recoil, as their grandfathers did, from the altaremma of ecclesiastical Baroque; Oberammergau has become a place of interdenominational pilgrimage; and the Holy Shroud of Turin has attracted the patronage of television, carbon-daters and the American space programme. But the liquefaction of the blood of St. Agostino remains a standing joke and the Sacred Heart an embarrassment, while eighteenth-century clergy are agreed to have devoted the time they could spare from the feathering of their nests to the denial of their vocation.

Chadwick has simply set aside these prejudices, gone back to the sources and started again. He finds another "world we have lost", certainly in northern Europe and to a large degree even in the South: a world still crediting relics and pre-supposed miracles, where the number of monks and nuns is large and growing, where new religious orders are regularly founded, where hermits are quite numerous and respected, where brotherhoods or confraternities command more loyalty than parish churches, a world of new saints, new goals of pilgrimage and new Stations of the Cross, and the Christmas crib. Alongside the well-known chronology of Enlightenment, the end of witchcraft executions, not against the removal of a sacred

statue at Prato in 1787 and the consequent withdrawal of the Habsburg rulers from their more extreme positions. However, that reaction must have been prepared, in part at least, by the literary opponents of reform, among whom none was more conspicuous than the eloquent ex-Jesuit, Feller, whose *Journal historique et littéraire* was already flourishing in the 1770s.

So far as the secular clergy are concerned, Chadwick finds them mostly unenthusiastic but "good-humoured", often comfortable but not sunk in vice and idleness, rather struggling with insufficient funds to meet the problems presented by poverty and natural disasters. The higher ranks worked to carry forward the impulse of the Council of Trent, and were especially anxious to train parish priests skilful in the confessional. At the top, successive popes tried to ward off the interference of secular powers and to balance the claims of popular piety against those of education and reform. Benedict XIV stands out as the hero, scholarly, unceremonious and sensible, author of "the best of all books about the canonization of saints," who as pope made a series of prudent concessions to the spirit of the times and gave a measure of approval to the reformist writings of Muratori.

Elements of the picture are criticized or gently mocked. Chadwick clearly believes the bull *Unigenitus* should never have been issued and Clement XIII's assault on the duchy of Parma never mounted. A delightful section describes the ineffectiveness of the Index, which condemned Hobbes's *Leviathan* only in Latin, fifty years after it had been published, and under the headings "Thomas" and "Gobes". On the other hand, he enters sympathetically into the statesmanlike motives behind the decisions that crippled missionary work in China and suppressed the Jesuits. Among many brief and pointed surveys of particular aspects may be singled out those on sermons, sanctuary, monastic prisons and the rise of the papal secretary of state.

About monks and nuns the author seems more equivocal. One must endorse Benedict XIV's view that "the worst pest among monks is too many monks", but perhaps a little more might have been said in praise of the monasteries. They may be said to have started the German Catholic Enlightenment. Gibbon compared Benedictine abbots of the period favourably with Oxford colleges as centres of learning. Even in the 1780s a new library for modern studies was added to the existing library at the Premonstratensian house at Strahov in Prague. Monasteries that survived in the Austrian Empire made possible the nineteenth-century careers of Bruckner and Mendel.

One of the book's main contributions is to supply the first major account in English of the Catholic Enlightenment. Chadwick argues that the habits of popular religion had already been affected by a perceptible growth of rationalism and fastidiousness before the advent of anything that could reasonably be called Enlightenment was viable among southern and eastern Catholics. But he then analyzes the various reforming tendencies at work within the Church of the second half of the century, which certainly include enlightened influences. The story reaches its culmination with Joseph II and Leopold II's reforms, the Synod of Pistoia and the Congress of Ems, both of 1786, and the French edict of toleration in the following year. At this point the path divides. To France Revolution brings the dissolution of all monasteries, the dissolution of the clergy and the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and the Cult of the Supreme Being. Elsewhere, the beginnings of the Reaction may be dated from the student protests at the new general seminary of Leoben at the end of 1786; the end of witchcraft executions, not against the removal of a sacred

statue at Prato in 1787 and the consequent withdrawal of the Habsburg rulers from their more extreme positions. However, that reaction must have been prepared, in part at least, by the literary opponents of reform, among whom none was more conspicuous than the eloquent ex-Jesuit, Feller, whose *Journal historique et littéraire* was already flourishing in the 1770s.

Almost three-quarters of *The Popes and European Revolution* is devoted to the old regime, another variation from the usual perspective. With the Revolution France has to be allowed more space, but still the emphasis is placed on the reception by the Church's central organization of events in France and then on the effects of French invasion and conquest in other countries. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of Chadwick's treatment here is the combination of detachment with sympathy that enables him to enter into the minds of almost all parties in this complicated period: he gives us a striking vignette of Napoleon VII to make concessions to the French emperor; he sees why some clergy gave approval to the new regimes and others became involved in Carbonaro societies; he particularly relishes the character of Cappelletto, "the most charming archbishop of the Christian centuries" before the deluge. "The only archbishop to prefer a married to a celibate clergy" host of "a salon of European celebrity" who resigned his see in 1817 but lived contentedly and little troubled by the reactionary government of Restoration Naples until 1836. The group of men with whom Chadwick seems to have least patience are the religious zealots who try to govern, and inevitably stir up trouble.

Finally, in the chapter on the Restoration and in the conclusion, he attempts to draw up a balance-sheet. The loss of so much land to the Church had made its tasks more difficult. The destruction of so many monasteries had permanently altered its nature, and small-scale restorations could not put the clock back. The categories "religious" and "secular" were now much more distinct. The work of Napoleon had

weakened Catholicism in the Balance of Power. Because all other ecclesiastical principalities had been abolished in the revolutionary period, the papal state was now manifestly anomalous. But in many ways the papacy and the Church had been strengthened by the ordeal they had passed through. "A break in history has the gain, among its many losses, that an institution can discard burdens from the past." But it was unfortunate that the international position of the papal state, coupled with revolution against all reform as likely to lead to revolution, identified the Church for so long with reactionary conservatism and led it to deny the worthy aspects of the heritage of Catholic Enlightenment.

The range of this book is so vast that any reviewer is bound to come upon passages that trouble him. In the interesting discussion of church music, I was pulled up short by the statement that Mozart's "musical genius lay in all that was blithe and bright and gay". In the accounts of Joseph II's dissolutions of monasteries, geography presents difficulties. Four hundred houses are said to have been suppressed in "the Austrian part of the Empire", but that is too high a figure for any area that can strictly be called Austria, while it is too low for "Austria in her German and Hungarian lands", which is the area to which a second figure of 738 houses, said to have been suppressed in "Austria", actually relates.

This is a long book, and so coarsely written that any summary of its argument or indication of its contents is sure to seem unsatisfactory to a reader. The theme is a great one, and the novelty of the author's perspective - the stress on Italy and southern Catholicism generally, the concentration on the old regime, the respect shown and justified for the eighteenth-century Church - makes it original in conception as well as in material. Gladstone once wrote that ecclesiastical history was the most significant branch of the subject, but "no department of human records has... profited so little... by the charms, perhaps even by the methods, of literary art." *The Popes and European Revolution* goes far to vindicate his first assertion, and triumphantly refutes the second.

## NEW FROM CHICAGO

### Historians & historiography in the Italian Renaissance

Eric Cochrane

August, £28.25

### Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna

Origins of the Christian Social Movement, 1848-1887

John W. Boyer

May, £21.00

### Bargessa 19

Sigmund Freud's Home & Office, Vienna 1898

The Photographs of Edmund Engelman, introduction by Peter Gay

June, £9.00 paper

### Power and Order

Henry Adams & The National Tradition in American Fiction

Harold Kaplan

July, £10.50

### This Great Symbol

Pierre de Coubertin & The Origins of the Modern Olympic Games

John J. MacAlister

June, £15.00

### Medusa's Hair

An Essay on Rational Symbols & Religious Experience

Gananath Obeyesekere

August, £15.75

### Words from Words

A Theory of Language in Fiction

John Pfeiffer

July, £14.00 A Chicago Original in paperback

### Vertical Classification

A Study in Structuralism & the Sociology of Knowledge

Barry Schwartz

July, £12.00 A Chicago Original in paperback

### Military Uniforms in Canada

Jack L. Summers & René Chartrand, illustrated by R.J. Morrison

August, £24.95 Distributed for the National Museums of Canada

## THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

128 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 9SD



## Edinburgh: revivals of the revue ...

By Harold Hubson

Fringe Theatre  
Edinburgh Festival

When Tavaré was battling in a desperate situation in England's first innings in the fourth Test, he was continually harassed by an impatient crowd. Tavaré did not vary the pace of his implacable stone-balling, and when he reached fifty the huddle of onlookers gave him a very respectable cheer. On such occasions it is customary for a batsman to show some appreciation of the applause by lifting his bat or touching his cap. Tavaré did neither; he made no acknowledgment that the crowd so much as existed, earning no more for his praise than he had appeared to do for its abuse. If Cricketers had played it, this is the contemptuous and magnificent way he would have played it. At the Edinburgh Fringe there is no Cricketers only, in fact, the nob.

There are over 400 Fringe companies in Edinburgh, and there are not enough audiences to go round. Some productions, like John McGrath's *The Cuch*, which is about the sad plight of the Ulstermen leaving industry, and which is being presented at the Moray House Theatre by the Scottish 724 Company, are assured of large audiences because of the excellence of the work. *The Cuch* (St Mary's Hall), which is the Cambridge Footlights latest revue, is certain of being packed out because of the excellent work of its uncensored. But there are exceptions in a waste of shame. There is a nasty and bitter spirit this year in the Fringe, bred of deep jealousy and widespread failure. Members of some companies attend the performances of their rivals, and ostentatiously walk out within a few minutes of their beginning. They tear down each other's posters, or cover them with graffiti. Many of the companies which came here with high hopes went home after playing for a few nights to audiences of three or four.

One has sympathy for these disappointed spirits, but not too much. With a few not always successful exceptions, Fringe companies have a lamentable notion of what constitutes modern theatre. Intellectually, they live in the land of their parents, not realizing that productions of plays like *Waiting for Godot* or Brecht's *Private Life of the Master Ruler* seem to a contemporary critic about as ancient as the Pentium Hills. In the 1930s there was a very popular form of entertainment called revue. It consisted of a series of songs and dances interspersed with sketches, and brought in a lot of topical references. In London revues are nowadays seen more rarely than moons made of green cheese. But on the Edinburgh Fringe they are as frequent as the rain. Oxford and Cambridge seem to be everywhere; other revues come from Bristol, Aberdeen, Bath, Sheffield, and one of them is entitled *Southampton's Old Medici Shows*. In more than fifty presentations this quivering form of art still bravely raises its withered head and shivers its tottering legs. It is a kind of show that is about as much fun as reading forty years' old volumes of the *Tatler*. Well, I must not exaggerate - almost as much fun. That is what the late-night theatre-gor gets at the Edinburgh Fringe.

There is better stuff earlier on. Recently, left-wing dramatists have been showing signs of misgiving. Brecht's *Thirteenth Night* appeared alarmed that the socialist dream might become, if realized, a socialist nightmare. Ken Campbell's production of *The War with the Nevers* suggested that if we treated the Third World with sympathy it would eventually rise and destroy us. John

McGrath himself wrote an excellent play called *Two in the Wind* produced at the Edinburgh Festival in 1971 in which I thought that the pure theme of revolution was thickening slightly. Now, in *The Cuch*, he belabors an old paradigm in the Ulstermen being murdered by capitalist greed and capitalist fear of war; he looks back on it through a haze of poetry and memories of J. M. Barrie.

McGrath's technique is based on the music hall type, of course. I know that music halls are obsolete, but this gives him wonderful chances, with a few strips of painted cardboard, to summon up visions of a couch party, an aeroplane, and a dimly rocking on a stormy sea, as well as a darkling glee backed by the sun setting over the quiet, misty coast. It is here that his heroine, played rather beautifully by Mary Ann Cobbin as a girl who has just come from from Blackpool, wistfully has a vision of a long and not very different from the one she has just had. Mary Ann Cobbin, and Simon McKean, piloting the girl and her husband across the waters, sing a thoroughly on the decline of the heart industry that floods the heart with sadness and a melancholy joy, which spills over into a mournful dignity in the anthology of Mr McGrath's lamentation on the effects of germ warfare. If you miss seeing *The Cuch* your life will be the poorer for it ever afterwards.

And it will be poorer, too, if you miss Charles Lewsen's solo performance of his new play, *In the Seventh Circle*, at the Matthew Hall in St Margaret's School. It is probably the best thing in the entire Festival, whether official or Fringe, a stupendous presentation, a whole heart-rending and tragic, a battle in one man's mind that brings self-inflicted damnation of the soul through, paradoxically, the excessive sincerity of religious faith. Robert Fitzroy had been captain of HMS Beagle on the famous voyage which was rich in the discoveries that led one of its passengers, Charles Darwin, to lay Victorian Christianity in ruins; and it is making those discoveries Robert Fitzroy assisted him.

When Darwin later published *The Origin of Species* Fitzroy realized, in the full irony of a divided mind, just precisely what he had done; he had helped to pull out the foundation-stone of the building in which he sheltered from the fear of death.

Lewsen begins very quietly by murmuring to himself the words that enable Sydney Carton to summon in the courage to lay his head on the guillotine: "I am the Resurrection and the Life, with the Lord; and he that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." Carton repeated those words to himself as he paced the streets of Paris all through the night that preceded his death; and in Lewsen's portrayal of Fitzroy they continue to ring ever louder and louder, in greater fear and more tremendous attempts to cast out doubt, as he imagines to himself that he is being tried before the court of God. The pain, the anxiety, the watchfulness in his face as he seeks, with always diminishing hope, some sign of possible salvation and forgiveness; the marvellous ease with which he can change a voice that is sometimes more than a whisper to something that sounds as frightening as the trumpets of all the angels demanding his condemnation; the skill with which he shows the acuity of systematic argument persisting even through the crescendoing music which lends him to cut his throat with the razor which he has held open in his hand from the moment of his entrance upon the stage; the strangeness, the sadness, the passion, and the very importance of the theological and scientific arguments so exactly and so excitingly delivered - these are sledge-hammer blows to the human heart.

Earlier in the evening at the Matthew Hall a group called "The Circle" present a play by their worthy leader James Morrison. It is called *Forces from a Black Room*, and it shows the dark night of the soul after the chief character's girlfriend has been killed in a car accident. Joy Jolyon gives an engine-throbbing performance as the bereaved hero and Madeleine Gould's ghost-girl is a veritable Ophelia.

This dark night of the soul business I pretty strong at this Festival I cannot help but think that this is what the new Oxford University Theatre Fringe is. *A Touch of the Bizarro*, is a play that sees the universe as essentially evil; abounding in violence and warlike, in abnormalities and aggression, even its kindnesses are cruel; and the character sketch is one that shows Margaret Thatcher being christened by Satan. It tries to put substance into the flimsy fabric of revue, and it should draw crowds of those devotees of advanced drama who believe that entertainment is an improper word. The Cambridge revue, *The Celtic Tapes*, is just about the most entertaining, the most delightful, the most

thoroughly good-time show, then I have seen for years. If this minor Cambridge's intellect and reputation, I can only hope that their doors will get up some new row about structuralism to put things right again. *The Celtic Tapes* has only one thing, that is, sentiment: there is no love song in it. Love songs, touching little ditties, tenderly sung, used to be a feature of Cambridge revues. But that was in the days when they had Clive James as manager. He is a tremendous loss to them. He was the Vera Lynn of university revue, and even now, despite his failure as a London actor, Cambridge would do well to re-engage him. His absorption with young girls who had tearfully lost their sweethearts used to make audiences sob, and it is not sufficient consolation that since he left Cambridge revues their satire has enormously improved. In *The Celtic Tapes* there is a scorching song about Americans who contribute money to causes which eventually result in the murder of British soldiers in Northern Ireland. This is satire in the grand class, for its lethal bolts are delivered with the courtesy of one presenting a bouquet. The

singer, Hugh Laurie, strums a guitar, entirely incorporates himself into the personality of a genial, woolly-minded, generous American giver, and without a word of repouch, with indeed every sign of friendliness and charm, destroys the man before our eyes. It is a superb execution.

The new play which has received the most enthusiastic praise is from Oxford. It is *Supernatural* or *for*, by Peter Brett, and it too is presented at St Mary's Street Hall. In a way it brings us back to Coriolanus. Supernatural, like the ancient doomed Roman, would tower over the whole world, and despise all other men; he has been born in the mind, though, in a purple, adopted, rejected, jeered at by his school-fellows, only, resentful, and patronized, he becomes to the best of his small powers, an agent of destruction, which leads the play to a simple, sad and stunning conclusion. Mr Brett writes with great compassion; the play is ingeniously directed by Debbie Shewell, and Jon Harding is remarkably both in Supernatural's apothecary and in his brilliant weakness.

## ... and clearings in the myth

By Nicholas Phillipson

Art Exhibitions  
Edinburgh Festival

Everyone knows about the horrors of Edinburgh's theatres, but not much notice has been taken of the delights of the remarkable gallery boom that has recently taken place in both the public and private sectors. What is exciting about this year's Festival is that the potential in all this new gallery space is now being realized for the first time. For although there is no single exhibition of major importance mounted especially for the Festival, the overall variety and quality of the exhibitions on offer is exceptionally good.

Most of the exhibitions in the public galleries take the form of visiting exhibitions of major works from great collections. Armand Hammer's superb collection of Daimiers on show at the Royal Scottish Academy (reviewed by Richard Coburn in the 725 on August 14) is a prime example. There is also an interesting touring exhibition of American Photography since 1960 from the Museum of Modern Art in New York in the City Art Centre. And there are two absorbing exhibitions of avant-garde art: one, of European work from the Stedisches Museum, Moenchengladbach, is at the Gallery of Modern Art; the other, of American Abstract Expressionist art, again from the Museum of Modern Art, is on show at the Fruitmarket Gallery and the City Art Centre. Professionals who know the collection well have been a little patronizing about this sort of approach to exhibition-building. But there is surely as much to be gained from seeing the work of a major gallery as from seeing the work of a visiting theatre or opera company.

The Abstract Expressionist exhibition is particularly interesting, not simply because the Museum of Modern Art's collection is matchless but because Abstract Expressionism has been somewhat neglected in this country. Walter Rauschenberg's chosen sixty-seven major works by twenty-six artists who belong to the first phase of the movement's history and who produced major work in the 1950s. His selection is designed to introduce the principal figures in the movement, to demonstrate the cen-

tral characteristics of that phase of its development and to point out roots in earlier European art with which we are more familiar. It is beautifully and unpretentiously done, clarifying the language of Abstract Expressionism, throwing into relief the intellectual and imaginative powers of painters like Pollock, Rothko and Motherwell who are, in their own ways, deeply private painters coming to life more readily in each other's company than in the company of painters who do not share their language.

Jon Schueler, an American painter who spends much time in Malling and has deep roots in Abstract Expressionism, is on show at Edinburgh University's Thelma Rice Art Centre. Schueler is an accomplished painter with a distinctive manner. Mallaig is his point of reference, as important to his painting as, say, the Spanish Civil War was to Motherwell or Mont Ste Victoire was to Cézanne. In the past, however, Schueler's painting, for all its accomplishment, has never quite managed to escape the charge of sentimentality. He has never managed to find the sort of mythic potential in Mallaig on which Motherwell and Cézanne were able to draw. His images of Mallaig are all too often illustrative, drawn rather than painted, relying on pictorial preoccupations of the Victorians rather than on the formidable intellectual and imaginative demands of abstract expressionism. But this is not an easy exhibition to review: its centrepiece is a series of six huge canvases, elegantly begun, which Schueler is going to complete in public during the Festival.

As always, the private galleries are full of Scottish painting both ancient and modern and as always it makes a flat, depressingly provincial showing. It is interesting to see how much more appetizing nineteenth and early twentieth-century Scottish painting looks, even through few of the paintings are individually of particular distinction. I suspect that the reason is that the Fine Art Society knows exactly how to give Victorian and Edwardian Scottish painting its due, and the lesson has now been learned by smaller galleries as well. The Fine Art Society's gallery in Great King Street is a superb early nineteenth-century house, and its Festival exhibition, *The Face of Scotland: the Land and its People*, draws on the own remarkably rich collection. The exhibition shows clearly that this was painting for an opulent, cultured

bourgeoisie which respected craftsmanship and intelligence in its painters and enjoyed familiar images of people and things provided that they were treated critically and freshly. The paintings have been closely and densely hung. They provide a complex variety of images designed to hold the cultural eye for a minute or two. But no longer.

Less fashionable images of Scotland are on offer at *Scottish Myths: an Exploration of Scotchness*, at the Little Lyceum Theatre. *Scottish Myths* is about the creation of popular "distorted" stereotypes of Scotland (but what, one wonders, is a "true" stereotype?). How, the organizers ask, did Scotland become the land of porridge, haggis, whisky and shortbread? How did the archetypal Scotsman become a seedy Highland Lad by Donald McGill or a neurotic Heilan' Laddie by Mabel Lucie Attwell? What are the cultural roots of the White Heather Club, *Dr Finlay's Casebook* or that sublime epic *Brigadoon*?

These are grave questions and this exhibition is a glorious attempt to clarify them. There is a catalogue full of gems and aperçus, written with wit and patriotic anguish, something for every student of Balmoral to relish. The catalogue actually promises more than a fairly small exhibition can deliver and the authors don't do full justice to the central exhibit, Murray and Barbara Grigor's awesome collection of frightful picture postcards - mostly comic - which come from the great age of the postcard boom, 1900-1914. Here we see the Edwardians had distilled all questions about Scottish history and Scottish culture into one great, all-embracing question: "What does the Highlander wear under his kilt?" At least half of the 3,000 cards in the Grigors' collection are devoted to exploring the Delphic mysteries of the kilt. One card says it all: it is a fully frontal view of a kilt man sporran which, when plucked, releases a long strip of topographical views. The caption says: "A Kilt of the tartan braid and braw Your heart the nuld Scotland will surely draw". But here the catalogue uncharacteristically misleads. It says that these cards finally reveal the mysteries of the kilt. But that is exactly what they don't do. They celebrate a mystery which, if it was ever finally dispelled, would probably cause the myth of Scotland to evaporate like dew on the heather.

## The art of assertion

By Michael Mason

Picasso's Pleasures  
Hayward Gallery

The Picasso show at the Hayward has not, so far, been a success. I gather that the exhibition needs about 3,000 visitors a day to be economically healthy, and it is only attracting about 3,000. By contrast, the display of royal wedding presents is turning out to be the most popular spectacle of the year, or even of recent years, with huge numbers flocking to St James's. What the unexpectedly modest numbers going through the doors of the Hayward suggest is that the general esteem which seems to attach to modern art in this country is in some measure illusions. Picasso's is among the dozen or so most familiar names in contemporary culture, but this does not mean that he has made objects which are widely liked. The name which assists the sales of mineral water, but the British public on the whole doesn't care for the art. The taste which is stirred and delighted by the tokens of aristocratic nuptials has resisted, and perhaps resented, innumerable solicitations over the years to be stirred and delighted by the work of Picasso.

But what have these solicitations amounted to? The chorus of critical praise for Picasso may be universal and loud, but it is not harmonious. The public knows of Picasso, and doesn't like him. The critics like him, but for diverse and sometimes incompatible reasons. The gallery visitor who wanted to know why he or she should admire the objects on show at the Hayward would not get a clear answer from the reviews of the show, or the accompanying literature. In other words, there is still an uncertainty or uneasiness in professional critical opinion taken as a whole, about the nature of Picasso's achievement.

One issue on which the critics are greatly in dispute is that of Picasso's beliefs about mankind and the world. A good deal of latitude on this topic is natural, and perhaps not very important. Art only permits such matters to be inferred, at best. Pictures and sculptures are not statements of belief, and by the same token the beliefs they may suggest should not come high on our list of priorities in looking at them. It is disconcerting, nonetheless, to survey the reviews of the Hayward show, and to see that Marina Vaizey (in the *Sunday Times*) sensed a "thematic consistency" in all Picasso's work, which is its "discreet vision of inescapable conflict, or else a dangerous calm of frozen mobility", while Gabriel Josipovici (in the *London Review of Books*) was moved by a preponderance of "tenderness" in work of all periods.

A reader with any discernment will not have difficulty in adjudicating this particular clash of opinion in favour of Ms Vaizey. In Mr Josipovici's piece the real object of admiration is not Picasso, but the critic himself. Consequently the works are blurry at a distance, in a haze of narcissism.

As I walked round the Grand Palais last year, I was filled with a sense of joy which I had not experienced for a long time. Every ten in the exhibition, from the finest matchstick construction to the largest oil, gave one the sense of perfect realisation. Curiously, I had just been attending the splendid series of concerts given by the London Sinfonietta and the LSO to commemorate Stravinsky, and there too I had sensed just this kind of clarity, wit and humanity to even the tiniest work.

But the case for the "humane" Picasso has also been made by critics who care about this artist. The conflict between their kind of account, and one which stresses the artist's mis-

anthropy or harshness of vision, is respectable. It even surfaces in the catalogue of the Hayward exhibition. Not that Sir Roland Penrose and Tina Hilton directly contradict one another over Picasso's beliefs, but it is clear that they have made different inferences about what these were. Sir Roland, introducing the drawings in the show (the one aspect of the British retrospective which offers material not seen in Paris or New York), places an emphasis on Picasso's own involvement in this medium of the subject of the crucifixion: the recurrence of the theme should cast

trungled by it if they were not already compelled by the man.

Iconography permits the visual arts to come close to making assertions, and Picasso in his graphic work, has at times been as iconographic as any artist of the century. At all periods, and in all mediums, his art has also been iconoclastic: taking a strong interest in single or paired images, static, frontally presented, and sometimes quite straightforwardly resembling ritual images. The human form is supremely important at every level of Picasso's activity. At the level of

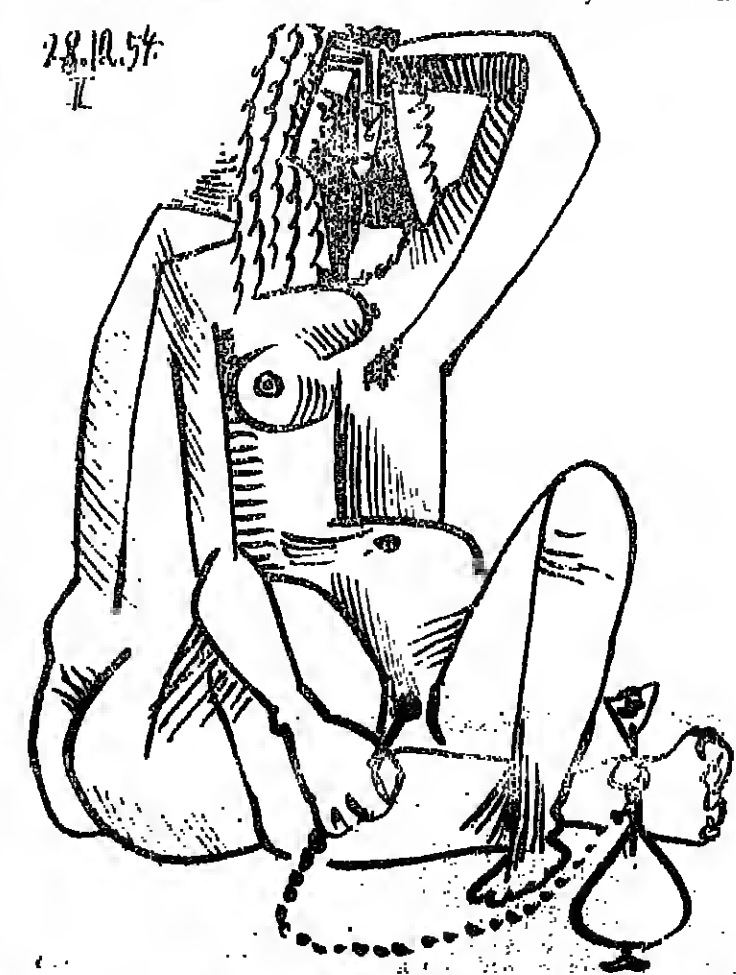
ingested, his great gift, though not his whole inclination, was as a graphic artist, and from 1925 onwards, line more or less takes over.

It is, indeed, extraordinary that "The Embrace", and countless other pictures, can be so filled up by a kind of doodling, and not lose intensity. Those stark black marks on Picasso's canvases - whether flowing round a whole form, or occupying a space - become the great channel of his assertiveness, the chief means by which he grips and arouses the spectator. Graphic marks are potentially the most assertive marks an artist can make on his surface. They bespeak the action of the hand, and thus the agent of the picture (especially when they are applied as pigments and busily as they are in "The Embrace"). They can become highly personal. There are Picasso methods of executing certain shapes - a method of inscribing a particular knob-neck-like form, for example - which are as unmistakable as a man's handwriting.

Picasso's way of reaching through his work and pressing upon his spectators, even upon those who have scarcely seen it, produces the feeling of a domineering, power-minded personality; hence, also, of a personality that is male-minded (and there has always been an unusually strong whiff of sexuality attending this artist). There may even be felt, in addition, a sense of a frivolous or exploitative relationship between the artist and his art. All this is perhaps an epiphany, a psychological mirage created by Picasso's technical mastery. Certainly he has had his episodes of self-effacement: the period in which he invented collage, for example, and thus often allowed alien inscriptions a place in his work. And there is always a danger, there is with any individual who is celebrated in a particular walk of life and perpetually offers himself to our attention in this capacity, of taking for granted the gifts and commitment which lie behind the celebrity, and hence of not including them in the whole picture. Picasso's sternness and energetic practice of his art is the first fact about his life, and his talent was no less contingent - no less a matter of might-not-have-been - than any other trait of his nature.

But the phrase written at an early date by Picasso on his work, and which is stressed by Tina Hilton, sticks in the mind: *Yo el Rey*, "I am the King". Picasso's treatment of sex in his pictures may be various, but it is not very comprehensive: the framework is utterly heterosexual, and the continuously struck note is that of a dominant and plundering masculinity. There was something cavalier and cheapening in his relationship to his own medium, and this was enhanced as the paintings became more graphic. Picasso's case is like that of Dickens in nineteenth-century literature. His gifts, and their thrilling, incontinent application, make it absurd to deny him a kind of pre-eminence in the art of the twentieth century. In other respects his achievement remains controversial, even suspect, and among fellow-artists his authority has not been as great as his fame might suggest. He is the King but (at least since about 1920) of the constitutional type - one who receives fabulous wedding presents, but has no powers.

The paintings which are used for the two posters accompanying the Hayward exhibition, "The Pipes of Pan" (1925), are very different treatments of paired figures, but they have things in common, and are linked by a definite logic. The "Pompeian" bodies in "The Pipes of Pan" have hypertrophied limbs, and perspective, though very demonstratively used in the foreground where their feet are planted, is abruptly truncated behind them. This is Picasso's favourite deep-but-shallow outdoor setting, a bench with the sea's horizon like a wall. "The Pipes of Pan" is concerned with volume, but not with depth. "The Embrace", of course, is all flat across, a lot of them covered with the hatching, dotting, and dispersing which are Picasso's most idiosyncratic trait. By contrast, there is something effortless about the continuously painted, volume-defining surfaces of "The Pipes of Pan" and related pictures. Picasso made repeated experiments with the third dimension, but he generally needed a bridge, or stile, to help him into it: the deliberate archaism of these pictures, the two-man programme of Cubism, even the ready-made elements in the sculpture. As is often



Picasso's "Drawing after Delacroix's 'Femmes d'Alger' (1954), from the exhibition reviewed here.

doubt on "the accepted belief that Picasso was a revolutionary and an atheist". Tina Hilton, in a quite remarkable essay on the show, and with a characteristically memorable turn of phrase, simply says: "What Picasso really thought about human life can scarcely bear contemplation".

There are some interesting suggestions packed into this way of stating the black version of Picasso. How does our inner "contemplation" of Picasso's beliefs relate to the outer, visual contemplation, by the artist, of his subject and, by the spectator, of the works? Were, and are, these contemplations scarcely bearable also? Hilton's phrase is a riddling one, but not idly so. It is one way of leading us to a central peculiarity of Picasso's art, indeed of his whole public being. You cannot escape the sense of the agent - of a man with certain feelings and experiences who has made these marks or forms - in looking at Picasso, any more than the great numbers of the British public who do not care for the art can escape a familiarity with his name. That is the issue of Picasso's beliefs keeps raising itself. But the identification of these beliefs is problematic, as we have seen, and bound to be so. Another verbal ambiguity is of use here: that of the word "assertion". Picasso is partly an art of assertion in the sense that it seems to express certain beliefs (this impression is due, on the whole, to an enforcing of a sense of force: being and activity. His expressive imagery is one aspect of a general habit of assertiveness. A less self-assertive artist would not have employed it as freely, and the critics would be less

## New Oxford Books:

### Philosophy and Religion

### The Expanding Circle

Ethics and Sociobiology  
Peter Singer

The author of the provocative and widely acclaimed *Animal Liberation* here examines the origins of ethics. This has recently become a controversial issue in the controversy over sociobiology. Studies of altruism in animals and human beings have shown that there are biological bases for the ways we behave towards each other. Peter Singer argues that we need a more objective view of ethical matters than biology alone can account for, and the progress in ethics is not only possible, but has occurred and is still occurring. £8.95

### The Arrogance of Humanism

David Ehrenfeld

The author traces humanism to its origins and shows how it has permeated every aspect of our daily lives, challenging the idea that, given the time and the resources, man can solve any problem and overcome any obstacle. "An overwhelmingly successful assault in those who claim to predict man's future in the interests of controlling his present." *Sunday Times*. Paper covers £3.95 Galaxy Books 3 September

### Hume and the Problems of Causation

Tom L. Beauchamp  
and D.C. Rosenberg

This book is an interpretation and defence of Hume's theory of causation. An outstanding feature of it is that it succeeds in making the theory relevant to current debates on causation. Substantial sections are devoted to the work of such contemporary philosophers as J.L. Mackie, David Lewis and Donald Davidson. £15

### Divine and Contingent Order

Thomas F. Torrance

This book examines the implications for our understanding of the universe of the Judeo-Christian claim that it is contingent: freely created by God out of nothing, and having an existence, freedom, and rational order of its own while still dependent on him. £9.50

### Gleanings from the Glorious Quran

Aziz Ahmed

This selection of verses from Pickthall's translation, *The Glorious Quran*, seeks to provide the essence of the Quranic message and to dispel many of the current misconceptions about Islam. Arranged thematically, it highlights the Quran's pronouncements on men's role in the world, what is required of the true believers in daily conduct and prayer, stressing the qualities of truth, justice, humility, kindness, and tolerance. Paper covers £3.50

### Oxford University Press



# commentary

## Survivors of the Reich

By Timothy McFarland

At the Fountainhead  
ICA Cinema

We are now so often confronted with the blurring of the distinction between fiction and non-fiction, between documentary and imaginative re-creation, that we may feel slightly irritated when, as in *At the Fountainhead*, we are forced with such explicit insistence to reflect upon their convergence. The central figure of the film is Johannes Schmidt, a German Jewish musician who has been living in London since the 1930s. This not very fictional person is played by three people - by two actors for the pre-war and post-war phases, and also by Val Kennedy, on whose experiences the figure is based, and who is the father of Anthea Kennedy who together with Nicholas Burton wrote and directed the film. Kennedy is seen in his own professional world, playing music and addressing the camera directly, TV-documentary style, about his responses to the present and past. Most of the other persons, whether played by actors or not, also speak to us slowly and deliberately with German accents, either directly or as voices-over.

Schmidt is visited in London by

two school-friends, the brothers Gerhard (from East Berlin) and Kurt (from West Berlin), and their sister Sophie. Kurt and Sophie have published in Germany an English book about prominent Nazi criminals still active and flourishing in the Federal Republic; they are facing a libel action and possibly even prosecution under the anti-left-wing legislation of the mid-1970s. Their book sounds uncommonly like Tom Bowler's recent *Blind Eye to Murder*, except that it has evidently been presented as a work of fiction, so the discussion of the non-fiction/fiction distinction skates never into reminiscences of history personally experienced in Germany in the Third Reich and after the war, and into talk of the unreformed authoritarianism of West Germany as perceived in the light of these memories.

Burton and Kennedy have been careful not to give their film the structure of a fictional narrative. Nevertheless some of the best moments occur when the techniques used are at their most fictional and cinematic, as in the episodes set in the rubble-mountains of Berlin in 1945: a black GI in a jeep, contemptuously tossing out a few lines of mind and seizing a camera, or the scene in which a woman is observed carefully unstitching the black-and-white swastika from the Nazi flag so that she can greet the Russians with a plain hammer, only to be given away

by the unfaded dark circle in the centre. Alongside this, much of the documentary material from the archives - Monty inspecting the destitute German population, or crowds of refugees on Breslau railway station - makes only a very general point and lacks any clear connection with the figures out of whose experience it must seem to arise. The same goes for the filmed extracts from Wolfgang Leonhard's memoirs about the crushing of an independent German Communism in East Berlin after the war.

Altogether, the implied view of German history is too impressionistic and oddly concocted to be satisfactory - as is the title of the film, which alludes rather pointlessly to an extreme right-wing group of cranks run by Ludendorff's widow. Much better than this is the projection of the Johannes Schmidt/V. Kennedy figure, which achieves a fine melancholy inwardness. He had left Berlin after the Reichstag fire and the subsequent arrest of the Bulgarian Communist Dimitrov, who had lodged with his parents. Vain attempts to settle in France, Holland and Soviet Union are shown selectively, with a dry, fastidious spoken commentary that captures the shaping action in memory admirably. Developed further, and free of much of the other material, it would make marvellous television.

lurs present, for example, were not only candid about his recruitment in the Nazi period, and the consequent slump of his reputation in present-day Germany.

In the end we were left with the impression of a Carlyle still problematic, but more ambiguous, protean, and contradictory than the textbooks show us; less the "voice" or even the "prophet", than the satirist, the ironist, the man of many masks.

A symposium on George Orwell is being held at Bretton Hall, Wakefield from September 4 to 6. Papers will read by Peter Keating, Gillian Tindall ("Gissing and America"), Jacob Korg ("Gissing and America") and John Halperin ("How Gissing read Dickens") among others. The fee including accommodation is £35. For further details contact Ros Stinton, 368 Springvale Road, Sheffield S10 1LN. Tel. (0742) 663976.

These and many other questions recur constantly in the discussions of scholars and students drawn from various universities in Great Britain, Germany, the United States, Canada, and Sweden, who assembled recently (from August 11 to 15) at the pleasant little town of Garmersheim, in the Palatinate, for an "International Thomas Carlyle Symposium". The moving spirit of the conference, Professor Horst Drescher of Mainz, has recently established a "Scottish Studies Centre" there, and this conference was held under its auspices, with the aid of a grant from the Volkswagen Foundation. The conference was intensive, quick-moving and lively, and it was widely agreed that it brought out the colourfulness and variety of Carlyle studies today.

Kenneth Fielding, one of the editors of the Letters, set the tone by an opening address which stressed the intensely personal quality of all that Carlyle wrote. On the whole it was the younger Carlyle who was most to the fore in the papers that followed - the Carlyle of *Sartor Resartus* and *Hero-Worship*, *The French Revolution*, *Past and Present*, rather than *Cromwell* or *Frederick*. As for the "unacceptable" Carlyle of *Latter-Day Pompeii*, *The Nigger Question* and *Shooting Niagara*, there were certainly a few swishes of the whitewash-brush at times. But on the whole the conference did not shrink from admitting, and facing, the challenging problems that surrounded Carlyle. The German scholar

## Bit parts

By Richard Combs

Muriel  
Camden Plaza

Towards the end of *Muriel*, a film made by Alain Resnais in 1963 but long unavailable in this country, a man puzzling over a piece of paper at a busy intersection asks for directions to the centre of the city. You're standing in it, he is told. In its brevity, its casualness, and its lack of connection with what comes before or after, the scene is consistent with what must be one of the cinema's most thoroughgoing mosaics. *Muriel* is made up of a thousand such fragments, as bright and realistic as snapshots, except that all the realistic links of plot and character are missing. They are lost somewhere in those familiar Resnais strands of time, memory and the imperfect past in which characters seem to be stuck. It is obviously dangerous in these circumstances to look for a single key, but that particular fragment comes close to supplying it.

To begin with, the city in question is Boulogne, which seems to have attracted the film-makers for its ambivalent status, part pre-war survivor, part reconstruction. And if the city hasn't yet come to terms with itself, then how can the inhabitants? Bernard, step-son of Hélène (Depierre Seyrig), has recently returned from military service in Algeria. War, and the awful sense of his complicity in a murder (the victim being the unseen "Muriel"), has permanently shattered Bernard's composure. He hops, scurries, cycles and rides (on a white horse - never was there a more ambivalent knight) through the film, and finally tries to resolve matters in another act of murder.

This, in a conventionally enough, is landscape reflected through character. But in a Resnais mosaic, his of both can become interchangeable, as in the strange scene where Hélène, at her wit's end, runs to some old friends and they take her in, talking of some past quarrel which they hope can be patched up, as if she and they represented the new and old parts of the city and were attempting a reconciliation.

It is also typical of a film in which the centre is everywhere and nowhere that those friends should turn up only near the end and then only for one scene. Important characters, in other words, can look like walk-ons, and vice versa. Bernard has a girlfriend, Marie-Do, who pops up

quite frequently but has no real presence in the film. This is a symptom both of Resnais's elaborate stylization - its piecemeal, allusive jumpiness - and the extreme realism of his theme. The bits of the main characters' lives that we see are implicitly no different from the lives of the bit characters whom we hardly see at all. When Hélène invites an old lover, Alphonse, to town, and he begins reminiscing about the affair he had after losing touch with her (during the war, of course), she interrupts with the anguished cry that it sounds just like their own story.

What is obviously more important here than the story (for all their obsessive reminiscing, it is hard to piece together what did happen to these lives. And that continues to be dispersed, incomplete, a trail of loose ends which can be followed as far as one likes. The man who can't find the centre of town is in a fix much like Hélène, who can't quite pull her life together, whose house is furnished with the antiques she is in the business of selling, and who wrings dinner guests to be careful with the plates because they've already been used. Alphonse wanders round Boulogne, ostensibly in pursuit of business contacts, but talking to everyone to avoid making the real contacts and decisions. The most important incidental character turns up in the film's last shot, Alphonse's wife Simone, who has come in search of her errant husband and wanders round the empty apartment from which everyone has fled, like so many other things.

If the disruption and randomness of what it shows make *Muriel* a pre-eminently modernist film, it has also acquired a certain period charm in the nearly two decades since it was made. There is even a (perhaps deliberate) romanticism about it. Hélène, dashing about on restless errands in a crushed felt hat and voluminous fur, could easily be playing Ingrid Bergman to Alphonse's Bogart in some middle-aged version of *Casablanca*. But what brings it right up to date is the fact that, made as it was immediately after *Last Year at Marienbad*, it marks a clear break for Resnais from that particular kind of avant-garde abstraction. In method it leads towards *My American Uncle*: it is an intricately detailed fiction through which we must pick our way like cautious researchers. The more evidence that turns up, in each crystalline fragment, the more we're obviously missing.

## Among this week's contributors

DAREK BEALES is Professor of Modern History at the University of Cambridge.

HAROLD BEAVER is Reader in American Literature at the University of Warwick.

ALAN BELL has been appointed Librarian of Rhodes House Library, Oxford. His biography of Sydney Smith was published last year.

PETER BLAND's latest collection of poems, *Stone Tents*, was published earlier this year.

ALAN BORG is Keeper at the Salisbury Centre for the Visual Arts at the University of East Anglia.

ANTHONY BURGESS's novel, *Earthly Powers*, was published earlier this year. His opera, *The Dubliner*, will be broadcast in 1982.

J. M. COCKING is Emeritus Professor of French at King's College, London. His *Marcel Proust* was published in 1975.

RICHARD COMBS is editor of the British Film Institute's *Monthly Film Bulletin*.

ANTHONY CAMPAIGNER's most recent book is *Nous Michel de Montaigne*. Denis Donoghue is Henry James Professor of Letters at New York University.

L. P. ELWELL-SUTTON is Professor of Persian in the University of Edinburgh.

GAVIN EWART's *The Collected Ewart* 1933-1980 was published last year.

PHYLLIS GROSSKURTH is the author of *Havelock Ellis*. 1980.

TONY HARRISON's new collection of poems, *Continuum*, will be published this autumn.

THOMAS HINCK's novel, *Daymore*, and his memoirs, *Sir Henry and Sons*, were published last year.

PETER KEMP is the author of *Muriel* 1974. His critical study *H. G. Wells and the Civilizing Age* is due to appear later this year.

BOWARD LARRISSY is a lecturer in English at the University of Warwick.

VIRGINIA LLEWELLYN SMITH is the author of *Anton Chekhov and the Lady with the Dog*. 1973.

MICHAEL MASON is a lecturer in English at University College London. TIMOTHY MCFARLAND is a lecturer in German at University College London. EDWARD NORMAN's books include *A History of Modern Ireland*, 1971, and *Church and Society in England 1770-1970*, 1976.

NICHOLAS PHILLIPSON is co-editor, with Rosalind Mitchison, of *Spenser in the Age of Improvement*, 1970.

W. W. ROBSON is Masson Professor of English Literature at the University of Edinburgh.

HELEN ROSENAU is the author of *Vision of the Temple: The Image of the Temple of Jerusalem in Judaism and Christianity*, 1979.

CAROL RUMENS's most recent collection of poems is *Unemployed Music*, 1981.

WILLIAM SCAMMELL is Staff Tutor in Literature for Cumbria at the University of Newcastle. His latest collection of poems is *Yes & No*, 1979.

R. T. SHANNON's books include *The Crisis of Imperialism 1865-1915*, 1974, and *Godstone and the Bulgarian Agitation*, 1975.

T. A. SHIPPEY's most recent book is a study of *Beowulf*, 1979. He is Professor of English Language at Leeds University.

JOHN STURROCK is the editor of *Stravinsky and Since*, 1980.

JONATHAN SUMPTION's books include *The Pilgrimage*, 1975, and *The Abolition of Man*, 1978. ALAN YOUNG's new book, *Dogs and After*, is due to appear in September.

## Akhmatova and Chukovskaya

Sir, - I should like firstly to correct an error in Henry Gifford's review of Lydie Chukovskaya's *Zapiski ob Anne Akhmatovoy*. Vol. 2, 1952-1962 (August 7). Mr Gifford writes: "They went into the Patriarchal church . . ." and follows this with a quotation from Chukovskaya's text beginning: "The singing was harmonious . . ." etc. In point of fact, both Akhmatova and Chukovskaya had already left the Patriarchal church when they heard the "harmonious" singing, and had entered another church, "a smaller one" nearby.

Chukovskaya notes that the singing in this church is quite different from the singing in the Patriarchal church, which she describes as "angelic". In the smaller church the visitors join in with the singing of the choir, and it is this event which prompts Chukovskaya's comment about the singing being "harmonious". Akhmatova's "gracious mind" on this occasion is, I suspect, not due to the atmosphere inside the church, which is, if anything, rather hostile towards these "outsiders" - nor to the quality or effect of the singing - but rather to an inner contentment which reveals itself in an open display of faith inside the smaller of the two churches.

Anna Andreevna got down on her knees before the icon of the Holy Virgin, while we went out. Shortly afterwards, she joined us. (p. 17)

The whole point of this description, it seems to me, lies not in a comparison of Akhmatova's poetry with the faces of the people singing in church, as Mr Gifford suggests, but in the contrast between Chukovskaya's own feeling of discomfort and Akhmatova's radiant face that day.

Second, it seems to me that Mr Gifford has omitted to mention some of the more important contents of this diary. Chukovskaya has meticulously documented the lives of many of Akhmatova's close friends and acquaintances of this period in the copious biographical notes to be found in the appendices. This information is invaluable for scholars, since it records at first hand what became of many minor writers, poets, musicians, artists, etc. It also provides much welcome information about the various people who volunteered their secretarial services to Akhmatova during the later years of her life.

Equally important for scholars of Akhmatova are the textual variants of many of her poems written during the 1930s and 40s which are presented in Chukovskaya's preface to the texts of fourteen poems which do not appear in the two-volume Collected Works edited by Struve and Filippov (Munich, 1968) and which have never been published in the Soviet Union.

We read with astonishment Chukovskaya's account in this diary of her relations with Olga Ivinskaya. Ivinskaya's role in Pasternak's life and work has been much romanticized and dramatized since the publication of her memoirs, *A Captive of Time*. Chukovskaya had known Ivinskaya before her arrest when they had both worked for a publishing house. When Ivinskaya was released from a camp in Polna in 1953 she offered to send parcels of food and clothing on Chukovskaya's behalf to a mutual friend, a writer named Nadezhda Adol'f-Nadezhkina who had remained behind in the same camp. When Nadezhkina was eventually released, Chukovskaya learnt that she had not received a single parcel from Ivinskaya during the entire period of time. Evidently Ivinskaya had pocketed money and goods while assuring Chukovskaya that Nadezhkina was receiving the parcels. On hearing the whole story from Chukovskaya, Akhmatova displayed a fury rarely witnessed:

To rob a friend, a prisoner who is dying of hunger . . . I never heard of such a thing in my entire life. ( . . . ) I hope you have already told Boris Leonidovich - whom he is eulogizing . . . (p. 154)

Typically, Chukovskaya said nothing to Pasternak. She blamed herself in part for having placed her faith in Ivinskaya ("careless, a pathological liar").

Mr Gifford is undoubtedly correct in his judgment of Chukovskaya's faith in Akhmatova's poetry, but he misses the real reason she continued to keep her diary with such care, and why she accorded so much awe to her meetings with Akhmatova:

I maintain that any religion is born from the belief that the dead have not departed from us. Is this a belief in God? No, very likely it is (a belief) in the marvel of meetings between human beings, (the marvel) of words, of ties. (p. 448)

It was an enduring belief in the marvel of meetings that sustained Chukovskaya throughout the years of suffering and hardship and led her to "decade" her diaries, of which there remains one more volume. This final volume covers, I suspect, the fate of Akhmatova's archive after her death, and the posthumous publication of much, though by no means all, of her work.

ISIA TLUSTY,  
St Antony's College, Oxford.

## The Turner Bequest

Sir, - Since competing groups of trustees of the National Gallery, British Museum and Tate Gallery have not been able to agree upon one place for the exhibition of the Turner Bequest, the time has come (as stated in the letter by Selby Whittingham in your issue of August 7) for the choice of the place and a new body of trustees to be made by the Government through Parliament.

The artist's gift was to the Nation and its People. However, it does not follow that there is an obligation to exhibit the bequest in London, and before any more money is spent on planning a new wing of the Tate Gallery the assumption that the pictures should stay in London should be questioned. The greedy metropolis, situated at the periphery of the realm, already has too large a share of our national artistic treasures.

Since Turner travelled much in the North of England, I suggest that Her Majesty's Government purchase a country house in that central part of the United Kingdom. A permanent exhibition in a house in Yorkshire would be ideal, because Turner often stayed with his patron and friend Walter Fawkes of Farnley Hall, near Leeds.

GEORGE HUXLEY,  
Department of Greek, The Queen's University of Belfast, Belfast BT7 1NN.

## From the Italian

Sir, - Yakov Malkiel, in his review of *The Cambridge Italian Dictionary*, Volume 2 (August 14), is inaccurate in his tribute to Dr Barbara Reynolds's gift for translation from and into verse, and ignores the contribution of Dorothy Sayers to the three volumes of Dante's *Divine Comedy* in the Penguin Classics.

Dorothy Sayers was wholly responsible for volumes 1 and 2, which appeared in 1949 and 1955. After her death in 1957, Barbara Reynolds completed the translation of volume 3 and wrote the notes and introduction; this was published in 1962.

Dr Reynolds also translated for the Penguin Classics Dante's *La Vita Nuova* (1969), dating the mixed prose and verse of the original, and Aristotle's *Orlando Furioso* in two volumes of verse (1975 and 1977).

BETTY RADICE,  
Penguin Books Ltd, 336 King's Road, London SW10 0UH.

The Arts Council Poetry Library has compiled lists of poetry groups and workshops, poetry magazines and bookshops in London and elsewhere. The lists are available free of charge from the Arts Council Poetry Library, 8 Long Acre, London WC2.

## 'The Blue Carbuncle'

Sir, - D. B. Gregor (Letters, August 14) asks about the last paragraph of "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle", in which the "carabuncle" - a "felony" is used. This has already been the subject of some debate, for example in the note to *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, edited by W. S. Barrington-Gould (Murray, 1968, Volume 1, p. 467), where the three other felonies which Holmes "compounds" and "condones" are mentioned.

From the first publication of the story in the *Strand Magazine* for January 1892, the phrase "commuting a felony" has appeared in every major edition, excepting that published recently by Penguin Books: the first English edition (Newnes, 1892), the first American edition (Harpers, 1892), the new edition by Newnes (1894), transferred to Smith, Elder in 1907, then to John Murray in 1917, and used for the coronation issue, the Newnes sixpenny edition (1898), the pocket editions of Smith, Elder (1912), transferred to Murray in 1917, and Nelson (1914), the thin paper edition by Murray (1924) and their omnibus volume (1928). It also appears in this form in the Author's Edition (1903-3) published by Appleton (issued in England by Smith, Elder, and later by Murray), in the two-volume Memorial Edition (1930) published by Doubleday and Doran (from which the Penguin omnibus [1981] and the Seeker and Warburg *Complete Adventures* [1981] are derived), and in the Crowborough Edition (1930), as well as the separate edition published by the Baker Street Irregulars (1948), and the Centennial edition published by Tauchnitz (1893).

Doyle did not shorten his Ts, and, as his handwriting was always very distinct, it seems certain that he did write "commuting a felony". Mr Gregor is probably right to suggest that the phrase is misused, though the sense is clear. Holmes was not commencing a felony (in that he did not condone it) nor committing one, he was forgiving a felon or commuting the penalty which should legally have followed the felony.

RICHARD LANCELYN GREEN,  
Poulton Hall, Poulton-Lancellyn, Bebbington, Wirral L63 9LN.

## Proust and Blossom

Sir, - It may be more than a simple sense of personal admiration that distresses me when I read reviews of *Kilmartin* and see references to C. K. Scott Moncrieff as, it would seem, the only translator of Proust's *La recherche du temps perdu*, except for Stephen Hudson's last volume of *Time Regained*. Even another more recent translation, by Andreas Mayor, with a long introductory statement, does not seem to acknowledge *The Past Recaptured* (the American title), which was previously translated by Frederick A. Blossom (A. & C. Boni; later Random House).

Stateside at least, Blossom's has been the standard and most familiar translation, to which most readers have access. Unfortunately they fail to notice the title-page attribution to Dr Blossom and assume that they are reading the Scott Moncrieff edition and the more publicized Hudson version right through the last volume of *Remembrance of Things Past*. Numerous scholars, and even Proustians, I know, have never realized this.

Frederick A. Blossom was an outstanding scholar, ardent atheist, a labour leader, social worker, birth-control activist, a Lovestoeite (Trotzkyite, that is), a food faddist, pacifist, librarian, and all-round liberal, from whom I drew all of my strength and ideas from my twelfth to twenty-three years. Indeed, when I was 13-14, I did all the proofreading with him, though by "his" I mean *The Past Recaptured*, which as I recall was commissioned by A. & C. Boni, publishers, for a uniform edition of the

*Remembrance* series because of some kind of dissatisfaction with the Hudson translation. (Later he edited *Creative Art magazine* for Albert Boni too.) At the time of "our" translation, Dr Blossom was librarian of The Explorers' Club in New York City. He died only a few years ago, in his nineties, active even through his last years in essays for the Appalachian poor. At the time he was the second oldest graduate of Amherst College.

LEE ASH,  
60 Himiston Drive, Bethany, Connecticut 06525.

## Reading on Horseback

Sir, - However many books John Wesley read on horseback (Letters, August 14) his equestrian skills pale beside those of earlier times. Erasmus, perhaps anticipating the competition, seemed to claim in antiquarian Latin that he wrote his *Praise of Folly* on a tedious ride from Italy. Modern scholars do their work on bumpy trains and planes, don't they?

JENNY MEZCIEM,  
Department of English, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL.

## Dostoevsky and the Jews

Sir, - John Bayley writes (July 17): "Not fireman, surely, but guardsman; more specifically one of the guardsmen on ceremonial duty in St Petersburg . . ." Can he be so sure as all that? There is cogent evidence from an unimpeachable source - Dostoevsky's own wife, Anna Grigorevna - that the "large building . . . with a watchtower", the setting of the fateful meeting between Svidrigailov and Achilles, was actually the "Petersburg district Police House (Petr Dostoevsky's apartment) in the corner of the corner street and Bol'shot Prospekt". This Dostoevskyan landmark, incidentally, survived in its original state until the year 1931.

I stand by my theory, then - and it is not mine alone - that Achilles was a fireman.

It is worth recalling, too, that in his *Coronation Manifesto* of August 1856 Alexander II abolished, among other things, the abhorrent institution of forced Jewish juvenile conscription. The action of *Crime and Punishment* (1866) is laid in Petersburg in the post-Emancipation period. But purely for argument's sake, let us concede that Achilles was a Jewish conscript. Even then, it is conceivable that "one of those unfortunate" would have been assigned to a Guards-regiment? Moreover, would an Imperial Guardsman have been posted in front of what we know was a fire station?

As to the equations - Svidrigailov = Wandering Jew; Achilles ("In his Imperial Russian uniform") [Bayley]: "wrapped in a grey soldier's coat" [Dostoevsky] = representative of nationalistic orthodoxy - for all their ingenuity, they remain unconvincing. The act of suicide is wholly incompatible with the notion of the Wandering Jew, while the idea of a hapless Jew, who speaks Russian, being the spokesman of Motier Russia just won't wash.

Having said all this, I leave Professor Bayley his humorous interpretation of the scene. For me it is still "ironic" and "symbolic", steeped in the eerie fog of Petrovsky Island.

As Dostoevsky himself might have said, had he read Professor Bayley's letter, "Fu, kakoi yzvor!" (pooh, bah, fiddlesticks!).

DAVID I. GOLDSTEIN,  
21 quai Malaquais, 75006 Paris.

A *Shorter History of Greek Art* by Martin Robertson (Cambridge University Press) which was illustrated on the cover of the TLS of July 24 is also available in paperback at £9.95.

## The United Irishmen

Sir, - When Roy Foster in his review of Séan Cronin's *Irish Nationalism* (July 31) writes of "recent research establishing just how unrepresentative the United Irishmen were", he is out of touch with the facts. In my 198 and *Chronos* (1979) I cite the most recent research on Carlow in 1798 (Sr Maura Duggan's unpublished thesis at UCD) showing that of a total population of 44,000 (then there were between 11,000 and 14,000 United Irishmen).

PÁDRAIG Ó SNODAIGH,  
127 Strand Road, Sandymount, Dublin 4.

## Burges and Waugh

Sir, - In David Watkin's review of *William Burges and the High Victorian Dream* (July 17) the story of the Betjeman/Waugh wash-stand is once again retailed. But if one turns from illustration 190 in the book to illustration 201, one discovers a very similar piece of Burges furniture. And this other wash-stand does sport "a prominent, highly ornamental, [presumably] copper tap in the wash-stands, then methinks there's method in it."

Evelyn Waugh suffered all his life from a Holmesian acuity of vision. If it be madness to confuse two Burges wash-stands, then methinks there's method in it.

H. R. CONRAD,  
Rehmat, CH-8706 Meilen, Switzerland.



## COMPUTING IN THE HUMANITIES

Edited by Peter C. Patton and Barbara A. Holman  
The use of the computer as a problem-solving tool in the humanities is described in this book. It covers the fields of: archaeology, linguistics, literature, history, education, music and art. 0 066 00490 4 £16.00.

## PRE-INVASION BOMBING STRATEGY

General Eisenhower's Decision of March 26, 1944  
W. W. Rostow  
A lively account of the decision-making process, in which the author participated, which led to the bombing of German railroads, marshalling yards, and cities. 0 066 00482 8 paperback £8.50. 0 066 00483 6 paperback £4.95.

## COMMERCIALISATION OF THE REGIONAL PRESS

The Development of Monopoly, Profit and Control  
D. H. Simpson  
Looks at the transition in newspaper ownership - from those interested in news to those primarily interested in investment. 0 066 00441 0 £12.50.

## BRAIN FUNCTION THERAPY

Gratien E. Powell  
In the Year of the Disabled this book will aid the understanding of the problems faced by the brain damaged patient and the techniques that the professionals are likely to use in treatment and rehabilitation. 0 066 00318 5 £18.00.

Gower Publishing Company Limited  
Gower House, Croft Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 3HR  
Telephone: Aldershot (0252) 331 551



# Return of the author

By John Sturrock

Geoffrey Strickland: *Structuralism or Criticism? Thoughts on how we read* 208pp. Cambridge University Press. £17.50. 0 521 231841

Geoffrey Strickland is a teacher of French literature prepared to resist the invasion of literary studies by French or to be fair to the variety of what goes on in France itself — by "French" styles of criticism. For him there can be no pact with the glamorous, overcharged techniques of Barthes or Derrida and their followers. The distinction in his book's title is to be taken as damning: Structuralism or Criticism, the choice is ours; but it is loaded one. Criticism is surely a good, and structuralism therefore a not-good; the critic can never be a structuralist, the structuralist has no business claiming to be a critic.

Strickland's essay, however, is by no means as combative as his title promises it will be. He is of a conciliatory and digressive temper, and his down-on-structuralism animates without ever governing his book. He forbears, as others earlier have forbore, explaining what structuralism is. He has a short chapter near the start, endorsing, no more, certain valuable qualifications introduced into the Saussurian view of thought by the linguist Emile Benveniste; he has a second short chapter near the end in which he scores some reasonable if also easy points against the late Roland Barthes. But nowhere does he say in so many words what it is in structuralism that he regards as malevolent. His "discovery" of anti-structuralism, there is no doubt, but that will only be fully obvious to those of its readers who know already what principles structuralism holds to.

The central, most heartfelt chapter of *Structuralism or Criticism* is called "Thoughts on How we Read", and this occupies ninety of Strickland's 175 pages. His wish here is to reinstate the figure of the Author, as a singular and hospitable presence beyond or behind the text which is attributed to him. Strickland is a forthright "intentionalist" who believes that a work of literature has a "true" meaning which is also its "original" meaning, knowingly invested in it by the person who wrote it. The task of the reader — guided, if need be, by his teachers — is to accede to this definitive meaning. He may not share in it wholly, or be aware that he has even found it, but he will be inspired to try to do so by his faith in its existence, together with the knowledge that he is participating in an act of communication between author and reader.

Strickland's adversary in the campaign which he conducts is not so much structuralism, for all its tendency to displace authors in favour of textual "systems", but Jacques Derrida, the predominant "post-structuralist", who has striven so wordily if also subtly these past fifteen years to rid the written word of the very "metaphysics of presence" on which Strickland takes his stand. Strickland is pointedly and intelligently reactionary. For him writing and speaking are not to be separated: the text is as warm and immediate as an item of conversation, and the meanings of what is written may be authenticated like those of what is spoken by reference to their unique source: the live author who first put them there. The proper study of literature, therefore, is to journey upstream to the source: "the student of literature is a student of history" is the logical outcome of the course that Strickland has been taking. This, agreed, is a profoundly anti-structuralist device to point to one's banner, since structuralism of any kind is bound to be a historical and to leave it as at best an open question which of the meanings discoverable in a text were contemporary with its writing or intended by its author.

Strickland has picked very shrewdly on certain extravagances perpetrated in the name of deconstruction, which the hands of some is more than that. In particular, he touches on

one aspect of the Derridan philosophy seldom if ever noticed: its solipsism. It is true that if a text is held to be fully autonomous or authorless, a construct of language and "intertextuality" whose centrifugal meanings are no longer to be correlated with a single originating presence, then the deconstructor himself expropriates the glory of creation — the meanings which he has located, in all their anarchic diversity, are suddenly his, the property of the gifted reader who has guided us to them. Strickland might have mused more than he does of this line of attack since it goes to the heart of the contradiction of Derrida, who has after all made his name as the Great Undoer of other men's Doings. He has said, I know, that he is ready and willing to be deconstructed, as all authors are susceptible of being, but his followers are not as yet rushing to take him upon this sacrificial offer. His own authority survives.

*Structuralism or Criticism* is not always so successful as this. It fails to engage with the serious structuralist theses in respect of convention in literature, of the extent to which all texts contain parody, plagiarism and repetition, of the generative force of language itself, of the fatal gap between what authors believe they have written and what readers understand them to have written. Strickland wants to put the clock back too far, and restore a Romantic concept of authorship whereby the creator of a work is held to be in total and undying command of its every rightful meaning. This will not work. I am sure that we all when reading assume that what we are reading is "intentional" in the weaker sense of being the product of certain intentions in the author's mind. These intentions may not have succeeded in act of writing but been discovered in that act. But there is no reason to press on from this sensible recognition to the extremity of arguing, like Strickland, that we should seek to relive the author's own semantic experience. Strickland's ideal reader is too self-effacing, having lost his entitlement to satisfaction at deriving meanings from what he reads irrespective of the problem of how they got there.

Nor would all of us feel Strickland's urge to establish consensual readings

## Artificially artless

By Lachlan Mackinnon

JOHN T. GAGE: *In the Arresting Eye: The Rhetoric of Imagism* 188pp. Louisiana State University Press. 0 8071 0790 5

In this book John Gage not only substantially clarifies the issues raised by Imagist practice, but also offers a sensible discussion of questions implicit in many different kinds of poetry. He does this by approaching problematic lacunae in Imagist theory, which he shows to be frequently self-contradictory where it is not incoherent.

In his first chapter, Gage examines the theoretical premises themselves, paying particular attention to Hulme and Pound. He shows that the theory led them to a blind alley, because its demands — that their poems be free of all convention — would, if carried through, have made their unattainable. He says, secondly, that the distance between theory and the poetry is to be explained by the failure of the former rather than the latter.

The second chapter shows that Imagism, despite its rejection of rhetoric, did in fact have a rhetoric of its own. A rhetoric, it is pointed out, is only a persuasive technique, and this discussion is resumed in later chapters which examine Imagist methods in detail. The first of these looks at the use of comparison, usually by explicit or implicit simile, on which Imagist poems depend. Using the Gestalt

of literature, in which all readers of good will should concur. There is a hint of bigotry about this, given the absence of any compelling test of verification beyond the appeal to authorial intentions. The meanings which we gather in to ourselves in reading are a mixture of the universal and the eccentric; but once we have experienced them there is no reason why we should surrender them in the interests of a majority reading, after intelligent disagreement with our fellow-readers.

In view of this pressing call for corroboration, the interpretation of literature, it is no surprise that Strickland should finish with a subdued but positive chapter on F.R. Leavis, who taught him and to whose critical practice he remains attached. A contrast is broached between Leavis and Barthes but, like too many other questions in this rather bitty book, it is dropped before it can take hold. This is a great pity because Leavis and Barthes are closer to one another than Strickland allows. He defends Leavis's celebrated and frustrating refusal to declare any kind of allegiance to a critical party or programme. In his clear desire to be heard as nothing other than the voice of his own serious response to what he was reading, Leavis's authority for what he wrote was himself. Barthes, on the face of it, was just the reverse, repeatedly telling us how he abjured all authority, that all interpretations were equal, that as a critic he migrated from text to text and spoke from within them. Yet he had much authority, as he knew, and his denials only drew attention to the unusual degree of it. By constantly shifting his ground and revising his methods, Barthes actually drew more and more authority into himself and made us more attentive to Barthes than to the literature he was writing about. Leavis was the more honest of the two in claiming an impossible independence, but a strong narcissism was common to them both.

Strickland is too set on distinguishing sensible English ways of discussing literature from irreparably abstract Parisian ones — the practice of humane from the technico-literary one might say — that he can see no common ground between Leavis and Barthes. A greater tolerance towards structuralism would have warned him that where difference exists so too does sameness.

terms of figure and ground, the author is able to show how unsettling some Imagist poems are in their reversibility, and, as in Hilda Doolittle's "Gread", an equivocal balance is sometimes achieved. Gage next looks at the means used to organize longer poems, which he shows to have been usually agglomerative rather than organic. The reasons for this are taken to lie in the Imagist insistence on simultaneity, which generated any very sophisticated interrelations between the parts of a poem.

Finally, we revert to the overall problem of Imagism as an epistemology. Gage shows that the Imagists attempted self-effacement, leaving things to speak for themselves, depending upon a belief that the world is univocally significant, and that some kind of natural law will deliver our responses. Pound in particular believed that this applied in ethics as much as in fact, that "is" and "ought" were one when mediated through images of desire.

Gage's consideration of how simile actually works poetically is perhaps the best thing in the book. His readings of particular poems are succinct and lucid, while the general points made have implications, acknowledged but unexplored, for much contemporary poetry. Although the primary intention of the book is to offer a treatment of the assumptions on which Imagism was grounded, and to show why the poems diverge from these assumptions, an intention admirably executed — its secondary effect is to encourage us to think again about the seemingly elementary, but nevertheless intellectually slippery, aspects of poetry as craft which are easily forgotten.

## Really imaginary

By Antoine Compagnon

FREDRIC JAMESON: *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* 305pp. Methuen. £10.95. 0 416 31370 1

Fredric Jameson's book testifies to his irritation with a post-Sartrean critical which, from Lévi-Strauss to Derrida, by way of Althusser, Foucault, Barthes and Deleuze, has taken Nietzsche as its authority for condemning all attempts at interpreting literature, which it sees as reductive, and for posing the question not of the meaning of a text but of its functioning. Formalism and deconstruction are alike in aiming at an immanent reading of the text instead of a "totalizing" one. They extol the partial and the local, the fragmentary and the disseminated, the haphazard and the schizoid. How, without rejecting textual methods entirely, can unity and meaning be restored to criticism?

This is Professor Jameson's purpose. He will not accept the ideal of textual immanence or the disintegration of the subject. His allegiance is to Marxism and his complaint against such immanent readings concerns their detachment from reality, from history. The Text becomes an object adrift, unattached to a referent. But how can criticism be reunited with history, and the text with reality, without relapsing into the historicism against which Structuralism rightly rebelled? Between the referent-less text and the text as mere reflection of reality, a middle way must be sought which will join literature and society dialectically.

In an extremely long first chapter, Jameson distils various French and German authors in search of a new, non-transcendent hermeneutic model, one which can put paid to the textualists without abandoning the Text; that is, give the Text back the reality and consistency denied to it in the name of Nietzsche. This synthetic Marxist hermeneutic which Jameson calls "the political unconscious", is complex: an explosive mixture of Althusser and Northrop Frye, together with a pinch of (a historicized) Greimas and a soupçon of (a dehumanized) Lukács. From Althusser Jameson takes his critique of mechanistic conceptions of the articulation of culture and society, and his accounts of a structural causality in which the superstructure — including the Text — enjoys a relative autonomy; from Frye, he takes means to organize longer poems, which he shows to have been usually agglomerative rather than organic. The reasons for this are taken to lie in the Imagist insistence on simultaneity, which generated any very sophisticated interrelations between the parts of a poem.

Jameson's thesis of the "political unconscious" likens literature to a myth which "must be read as a symbolic mediation on the destiny of community". The Text attempts to resolve, in the domain of the Imaginary, the contradictions of social reality — just like the mechanisms of the "pensée sauvage". In Lévi-Strauss, literature is a "historical pensée sauvage", and must thus be read as a rewriting of history and of reality. Here, then, is the middle way between historicism and textualism: theories of representation in the last resort, Jameson's new hermeneutics tend towards perpetual cultural relativity as all writing. One might quibble with the expression "political unconscious", which raises the question whether it is to be taken as a collective unconscious. Despite Jameson's allusions to Freud and Lacan, he owes his conception of the "political unconscious", as well as the doubts about the status of archetypes that it entails, to Jung.

In the remainder of the book this thesis is tested out on three authors: Balzac, Gissing and Conrad, in order to show the emergence of the bourgeois subject and then its disintegration, of which textualism is only the symptom, in the hope of a fresh organization of social life to give the individual back his identity. This leads Jameson to a judicious re-examination of the received view of Balzacian realism. There is, he agrees, realism in Balzac, but it comes not, as Lukács would have it, from the novelist's sensitivity to political and social realities. On the contrary the Balzacian novel is in principle utopian rather than realist. But reality resists the novelist's fantasy, which demands systematic satisfaction or conjuration of the obstacles opposed to it by a reality principle which is also history. Hence realism is a construction intended to resolve social contradictions in imagination, at least, and to indulge fantasy. Balzac, in fact, is a realist the better to satisfy his imagination.

With Conrad, Jameson notes the novelist's indeterminate position between high literature and popular culture, between Proust and Stevenson, as represented by the contrast between the two parts of *Lord Jim*: the episode of the Patna and Jim's life in Patusan. Conrad belongs simultaneously to modernism and to popular fiction, to textual writing and the adventure story. The times through which he lived, of rationalization and the bourgeois cultural revolution, were those which saw the emergence of the Imaginary, as a utopian compensation for the refraction of social relations. The world was de-realized by being rewritten impressionistically. But with Conrad the Imaginary is ambiguous, at once archaic, like the stratagem of the story-teller, to which he resorts with Marlow, and modernist or even post-modernist, as with the start of *Lord Jim*, which looks forward to Joyce, Virginia Woolf and the "écriture flottante" of the textualists.

In Gissing, who comes between Balzac and Conrad, a post-Dickensian stage of the capitalist mode of production destroys the model of social totality hitherto resented by the realist city, dwelling instead the "experimental novel". Experimental novels, Zola's for example, imagine other forms of history which disturb class boundaries and dissolve bourgeois bad faith — such is the philanthropic model of *The Newer World*, which might apply to have been compared with its Balzacian equivalent, *L'Envers de l'histoire contemporaine*. Since this novel lacks the *ressentiment* which Jameson sees as the novelty of Gissing's book, as well as the mainspring of subsequent bourgeois fiction.

The originality of Jameson's readings comes from the fact that he is not content merely to unmask the ideological and reactionary in literature, as Marxist hermeneutics has traditionally sought to do. Every cultural object contains anxious, progressive dimensions, a utopia, a Bloch, contrast with ideology. His own positive hermeneutics is fixed as firmly on the utopian as the ideological. Balzac, Conrad and Gissing can thus be saved for a history of the Imaginary which is not just "false consciousness" but also desire. The axiom of *The Political Unconscious* is that any text, however ideological, is also utopian — it contains a promise. Some will not fall to adjudicate this a very optimistic axiom, or even an idealist or humanist one, even though Jameson takes every precaution not to confuse it with what Marlow has to say in *Heart of Darkness*: "The mind of man is capable of anything — because everything is in it, all the past as well as all the future."

Cambridge University Press have recently reissued *Semantics*, F.R. Palmer's introduction to the subject for students and the general reader (222pp. £12.50. 0 521 28376 0; paperback, £4.50). This second edition includes chapters on such topics as "Lexical Semantics", "Semantics and Grammar" and "Utterance Meaning", and the author has also taken account of recent major advances in the field, notably in a new chapter on "Semantics and Logic".

## An earl and his agitations

By R. T. Shannon

GEOFFREY B. A. M. FINLAYSON: *The Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury 1801-1885* 639pp. Eyre Methuen. £19.50. 0 431 28200 7

If you brave the Piccadilly traffic and then brave the riddle of ill-conditioned young people swarming at the base of the "Eros" fountain (or Christian Charity or Divine Love: there has never been an authoritative designation), you can read on a series of small panels set around the skirt of the bronze mantle a tribute to the memory of Anthony Ashley Cooper, seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, Knight of the Garter, born 1801, died 1885, composed by Gladstone.

During a public life of half a century he devoted the influence of his station to the strong sympathies of his heart and the great powers of his mind to honouring God by serving his fellow men an example to his order a blessing to his people and a name to be by them ever gratefully remembered.

The two allusions to Shaftesbury's aristocratic status are characteristic of Gladstone; and they reflect accurately Shaftesbury's own highly paternalistic disposition. They pose as well a problem at the centre of Geoffrey Finlayson's scholarly enterprise of providing an ample and comprehensive reconsideration of Shaftesbury nearly a century after Hodder's three celebratory volumes of 1887.

What Finlayson reveals most vividly and rewardingly in his portrait is that, though an aristocrat, Shaftesbury was always an outsider, both socially and politically. He was never at ease with his order, rarely on speaking terms with his father, awkward in his Whig upbringing, usually at odds with the Tories, invariably embarrassed financially, finding eventually a measure of stability only in a happy marriage and as the retainer of his stepfather-in-law and father-figure substitute, Palmerston. A misfit in his time very often comes into his own with later generations. Shaftesbury, a misfit on a grand scale, gets the worst of both worlds. He "fits" even worse with us now than he did then. The Hammonds offered him in the 1920s as a feature in their polemic against the Industrial Revolution: an unconvincing role, increasingly ungrateful since Geoffrey Best's brilliant short survey (1964) corrected the Hammonds but eschewed biographical ambitions. Georgina Battiscombe's short biography (1974) was the first to offer deeper insights into the psychological aspect. But the great Victorian reputation celebrated by Hodder still lay in ruins. Shaftesbury's ultimate failure, perhaps, was to fail Lytton Strachey's test as a target for his *Eminent Victorians*; too easy, it was reserved for Charles Whibley to unravel for the post-Victorian generation Shaftesbury's egotism, philistinism, joy-killing moroseness, intolerance, the barrenness of the *Imaginaire* which is not just "false consciousness" but also desire. The axiom of *The Political Unconscious* is that any text, however ideological, is also utopian — it contains a promise. Some will not fall to adjudicate this a very optimistic axiom, or even an idealist or humanist one, even though Jameson takes every precaution not to confuse it with what Marlow has to say in *Heart of Darkness*: "The mind of man is capable of anything — because everything is in it, all the past as well as all the future."

Though never ceasing to strive to save from tragedy those who sought his protection, Shaftesbury, concluded Whibley, "will be remembered as the most darkly tragic figure of his generation."

This rather hyperbolic interpretation is certainly not one sustained by Finlayson. His treatment is characterized by a gently disinterested detachment, leaning discreetly in the direction of sympathetic awareness of Shaftesbury's problems and burdens. Indeed, problems and burdens are very much the dominant theme. Shaftesbury indulged a penchant for being one of life's victims; and he had a talent for complaint. He was the leader of the Evangelical in his time, and it was never happy with it as the "right" degree of his "Christianity". He was never happy with it as the "right" degree of his "Christianity". He was never happy with it as the "right" degree of his "Christianity".

"Even Falstaff would not march through Coventry with them.")

Many of his problems were self-inflicted, mainly by incompetent bigotry. Long before Shaftesbury died the influence of the "Saints" had degenerated into performing as the Establishment wing of the philistine puritanism which poisoned Victorian culture. The main count against Shaftesbury is that he did so little to alleviate this toxicity. Denis Brogan remarked in 1942 that "the ecclesiastical position of the great Lord Shaftesbury is probably that which appeals least of all to the religious mind of today". Another 70 years have done nothing to make the weight of that dead Victorian hand lighter, or the values it sought to impose more appealing. Nor is there any escape from it. Any presentation of Shaftesbury which deprecates or mitigates the sovereign fact that he abated not a tittle of the narrowest and most fanatical "Protestant" doctrinal severity misses the main point about him. Shaftesbury was fully assured of the direct and constant providential government of the world, the immanence of the Second Coming, the pervasiveness of sin, the hopeless depravity of man, with the human heart invariably "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked". Finlayson cannot be faulted for failing to give full value to this aspect. He is especially good on the "great doctrine of Man's corruption and infirmity" "coupled with the prodigy of the Atonement" which was the core of Shaftesbury's theology, and which he found "far more comfortable than any reliance on Man's perfection" ("By God's grace, I hold such a doctrine in terror and abhorrence").

Shaftesbury's devotion to and "eager acceptance of the great, necessary and most comfortable doctrine of the Atonement" was by no means the channel of a great, necessary and most comfortable application of Christianity to social problems. He deeply distrusted Christian Socialism because of its tendencies towards a notion of justification by works. For Shaftesbury, social endeavour, as Finlayson makes clear, "like missionary work, was not a way of forcing God's hand; it was a way of harmonizing with God's will". Gladstone in fact was giving Shaftesbury rather too much of a philanthropic edge by asserting that he served his fellow men as a way of honouring God. Shaftesbury himself would quite have loved to assume their proper function of protecting the helpless; but it was more important to spend money on the building of churches and to send forth ministers of religion. "All hopes are groundless, all legislation weak, all conservatism nonsense, without this alpha and omega of policy."

"A blessing to his people?" There is a view that Peel, denounced by Shaftesbury as a cold materialist, did more good for the people in one budget than Shaftesbury achieved in a lifetime of conspicuous sentimental agitation. In this respect Gladstone provides an instructive contrast, which Finlayson perhaps might have made more of. Gladstone, a happy child, was painlessly bred an Evangelical. Shaftesbury, the unhappy son of woefully parents, made himself painfully into one (without, it appears, a distinct "conversion" experience). They intersected as pious young men in the House of Commons in the 1830s, to all appearances the same type, both with first-class degrees from Christ Church, both with the notion that the great role of the Church would be to "conserve the kingdom", both were ambitious to perform great services for God in public life. But while Shaftesbury remained content to be fixated at the anti-intellectual level of religious fanaticism which had been created for himself, Gladstone found the biggest weakness he had inherited in his character. He was not happy with it as the "right" degree of his "Christianity". He was never happy with it as the "right" degree of his "Christianity". He was never happy with it as the "right" degree of his "Christianity".

He emancipated himself by means of the "high" doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and adventured off to grapple with the "march of mind" and the "march of science" (infidelity, insubordination, pride and good intentions). While Glad-

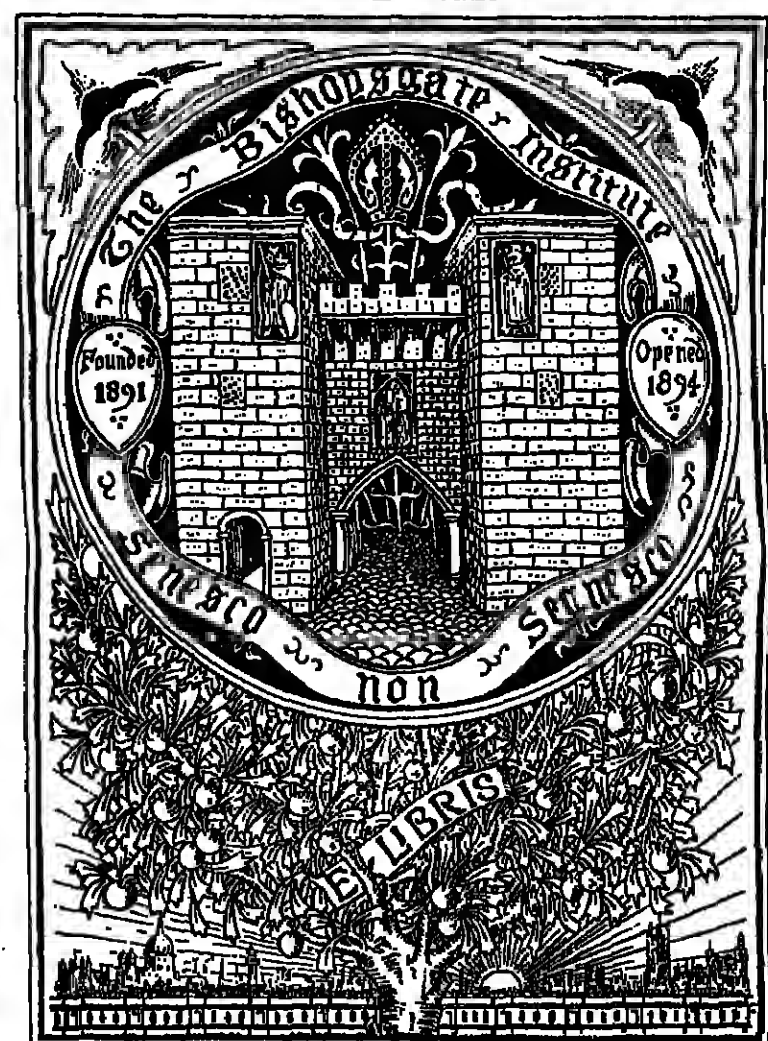
stone retained his Church interests and his special dedication to philanthropic office, he decided that Peel showed the better way to a larger and more effective notion of redemption. Budgets would indeed be the thing.

Shaftesbury and Gladstone diverged during the 1840s and 1850s, not without bitter sentiments on the part of Shaftesbury, the outsider, as he observed Gladstone's brilliant progress towards the heart of the great world of politics. For the other central point brought out and underlined by Finlayson is a confessed lack of "vision" in Shaftesbury, a proneness to failure of nerve, a despondent awareness that he lacked that toughness of fibre with which Gladstone was so copiously endowed and without which a great political career was impossible. Thus, a disinterested and detached examination of Shaftesbury concludes not only that churches and ministers took precedence of social endeavour; it concludes also that social endeavour was a grudgingly accepted second best to reluctantly renounced political ambition.

The reflections likely to occur as one stands by Gladstone's tribute on Shaftesbury Avenue towards Cambridge Circus (the original site of the projected memorial in 1883) are apt to be on the theme of the mocking ways of time and chance. Immediately on its unveiling in 1893 there was hostility to Alfred Gilbert's statue, with its punning references to a shaft being buried in the earth (I calculate that the target spot is just in front of the lamp-post at the top of Lower Regent Street). Was a nude, epinephrine youth really the most appropriate memorial to the men who succeeded Wilberforce as the embodied conscience of Evangelicalism? Ironically, the Daily News some years later, in a review, now makes such an error only too appropriate: thus disconcertingly does life imitate art. And is not the main street of theatre-land a cruel satire on the name of one who held this stage in the deepest distrust and did his best to prohibit the "pollution" of a production of *La Dame aux Camélias*? City planners designed Shaftesbury Avenue in the 1880s to link Bloomsbury with Whitehall and the West End. Thus, symbolically, they opened the way to the invasion of the heart of Victorian values by the ethos for which Shaftesbury became notorious. Shaftesbury himself would have relished these ironies. He spent his life telling himself he was a failure and a deserved object of mockery and despair. He was sure that a biography of him would be "of small interest, and of smaller use, to anyone alive, or anyone to come". The essence of Finlayson's disproof of that opinion lies precisely in the very characteristic terms of the explanation Shaftesbury went on to give: no one but himself could know "the reasons on which I acted", the sorrows, the vexations, the public and private, that have attended my career; the friendships I had to sever, the political temptations I resisted and the wear and tear of my income and health". Finlayson has taken Shaftesbury at his word; and has made of this litany of complaint a biography of great interest.

The "reasons" on which Shaftesbury (or Lord Ashley, as he was until he inherited the earldom in 1851) acted are indeed matters to be circumspectly treated. Finlayson is wisely insistent that in all his comments about his own position, the state of society, and the conduct of politics, Shaftesbury's views have to be "approached with care". There is the dimension of isolation and alienation to be considered; there is also a dimension of a type of romantic-depressive psychological pattern, which Shaftesbury himself came very early to diagnose and define, "how curious and uncertain is my character", he noted in 1829; "sometimes for a while in the wildest and most jovial of spirits; at others and for a long period in cruel, & despondent". Thirty years later he still observed the same character of himself: "my temperament is painfully

As for friendships severed: Shaftesbury was a difficult man to please; and his paranoid strain rather eagerly detected plots and conspiracies. Gladstone was shocked to discover Shaftesbury's real opinion of him when Hodder's copiously indiscreet volumes came out in 1887. A particular category of those who suffered a withdrawal of Shaftesbury's countenance were "Saints" who tended to go soft. There were Blackwelder and Venn of the younger generation in "the full bloom of arrogant unbelief"; and many more were similarly "deep-dyed in this foul insult to our Lord" of wanting to make some accommodations to



This bookplate (1903) for the Bishopsgate Institute is taken from the Winter 1980 issue of *The Private Library*, Punce, Middlesex: the Quarterly Journal of the Private Libraries Association (subscription £10). It combines a circular design by Walter Crane of an imaginary medieval view of Bishop's Gate and a decorative base with a tree and London skyline by G. M. McCarthy.

susceptible: I am very soon elated and I am rapidly depressed, both in extremes, at one moment in the highest joy, then in the deepest despair". His personality was profoundly unstable. Henry Fox noted in him in 1821 a "dash of madness". Florence Nightingale remarked that had Shaftesbury not devoted himself to reforming lunatic asylums (as it happened, literally the alpha and omega of his public work) he would have been in one himself. Finlayson speculates on the possibility of hereditary cyclothymia, with reference to a comparable case-study by Oliver Ransford of David Livingstone. A paranoid strain is certainly evident.

His vulnerability to criticism and to political wounds and bruises is a chapter in the psychopathology of Victorian life. As for labours, difficulties, sorrows and vexations, there is no end. It was a very rare gleam of light indeed when, in 1845, Lord Ashley congratulated himself on "such a thing almost before unpublic, but God and His Truth, should have overcome Mammon and Moloch, and have carried, in one session, three such measures as the Private-works Regulations and the two Bills for the erection and government of Lunatic Asylums. Non Nobis, Domine... Much more indicative of his fortunes was the load of abuse he caused to fall on his head when in 1847 he presumed to accept the government's compromise proposals on the factory question. Shaftesbury was prone to make injured announcements that he had been "deposed from the leadership of the Protestant Party". "Even on my own dunghill", he sulked in 1871 over the Ragged School Union, "I am no longer the true Chatterbox!"

As for friendships severed: Shaftesbury was a difficult man to please; and his paranoid strain rather eagerly detected plots and conspiracies. Gladstone was shocked to discover Shaftesbury's real opinion of him when Hodder's copiously indiscreet volumes came out in 1887. A particular category of those who suffered a withdrawal of Shaftesbury's countenance were "Saints" who tended to go soft. There were Blackwelder and Venn of the younger generation in "the full bloom of arrogant unbelief"; and many more were similarly "deep-dyed in this foul insult to our Lord" of wanting to make some accommodations to

science, scholarship and conscience. Was not Jowett, the infidel Master of Balliol, the son of one of Shaftesbury's old collaborators? And was not *Ever Home*, that "most pestilential book ever vomited from the jaws of Hell", written by one who came from "right good Evangelical stock"? His puritanism made it quite clear to him that the demonstrations against his sabbatarian efforts to prohibit Sunday trading ("Secdion and indelicacy") were inspired by Russian agents. And was equal plain to his mind that Renan had written the *Vie de Jésus* for "the most iniquitous purposes".

And as for the political temptations that Shaftesbury resisted, it must be allowed that his record is impressive. His place on the India Board in Wellington's administration proved such a painful experience that he never thereafter regained confidence in his executive capacities. A sense of "predestinated failure" made him decline an offer by Palmerston in 1830; he served Peel briefly as a Lord of the Admiralty in 1834; but that was his last political office. His confession of failure was to take a place in the Royal Household; but his dislike of Queen Victoria (reciprocated) made that a course uncomfortable (he denounced her "total ignorance of the country and the constitution, her natural violence and false courage, her extreme and ungovernable willfulness"). His happiest appointment was as an Ecclesiastical Commissioner, from 1841. Still, it was something that Peel could think of him for the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; and something even more that he should have declined Palmerston's offer of the Duchy of Lancaster and a seat in the cabinet in 1855, and Derby's offer of the Home Office or the Presidency of the Council in 1866. These renunciations stemmed from his early sense of inadequacy and a conscious decision to make an alternative "independent" career of public charity and philanthropy. "This clearly is my province, I am called to this and not to any political or social honours". The pious fiction that Shaftesbury was called to his work when as a Harrow schoolboy he witnessed the pauper's funeral does not survive the distinctly rankling note in his statement of 1841: "I have taken that course which will extend me, perhaps for ever, from a share in the official government of this kingdom". This was after the impact of



1840 of the Report of the Commission inquiring into Child Employment, the "most famous Blue Book of the century". Not for Shaftesbury the "path of profit and honour", but rather the "path of 'no gain' and humility".

It taxed all Shaftesbury's resources of humility to watch not only Gladstone's progress up the path of profit and honour ("myself, slippery, uncertain, politico-Churchman, a non-Romanist Jesuit", "impetuous and revolutionary", "utterly untrustworthy") but also that of the "Hebrew Disraeli". That Disraeli was a Jew and "sprang from an inferior station" was in itself a "good thing", as it demonstrated the "liberalism of our institutions", but Disraeli's behaviour in 1867 over Reform revealed him as having accepted the "Condition of Satan", a "leper", "without principle, without truth, without feeling, without regard for anything human or divine, beyond his own personal ambition". Shaftesbury, it should be emphasized, was not in the least anti-Semitic; he had a great reverence for the Jews as bearers of a divine legacy; and spent a good part of his life in plans for their conversion, and their repatriation to the Holy Land as a necessary precondition of the imminent apocalypse. He had much ado in this connection with the project of a bishopric of Jerusalem (the first bishop declined to sail thither on H.M.S. Infernal, but was quite content with H.M.S. Devastation); Shaftesbury made a point of bowing to Jews in the streets of German watering places; no doubt to their puzzlement.

The private dimension of Shaftesbury's difficulties and sorrows and vexations gets from Fintyson its fullest exposure. Mrs Battscombe had asked the question about the extent to which Shaftesbury's public disabilities derived from an emotionally crippled childhood. He himself identified as the salient feature in his life the fact that his parents disliked him. Fintyson cautiously points out that Shaftesbury's allegations in this matter need to be treated as circumstantial. In others, the sixth earl and his daughter, the duke of Marlborough seem to have been conventionally careless parents but not brutes. They may indeed have provoked Shaftesbury into his religious zealotry, which in turn would have not endeared him to them. And Shaftesbury's relationship with his own eldest son and his daughter-in-law (that daughter of Heth) was difficult, to say the least. Moreover, the alternative domestic scene into which Shaftesbury retreated was odd enough for a man of strict religious principles. He married Minny Cowper, Melbourne's niece and (probably) Palmerston's daughter; Shaftesbury was highly embarrassed that Palmerston took so long to marry his mistress after Lord Cowper's death in 1837. Nor was he ever quite at ease in the Palmerston ménage at Broadlands. The habit of pleasurable activities on the sabbath especially "grieved his soul". "What a predominance of worldly spirit!" "Woe is me, that I am constrained to dwell in the tents of Kedar".

The tents of Kedar at least gave Shaftesbury the satisfaction of being "near the fountain head" when Palmerston was in office, and especially when he was prime minister for almost the whole of the decade 1855-65. He was in a position to influence Palmerston's ecclesiastical appointments; since the prime minister "did not know Moses from Sydney Smith" and treated God as a being "but remote foreign Great Power". Shaftesbury did not always get his own way and Palmerston would occasionally prefer an "adherent of Bellini" (if only because Palmerston, a son of St John the Evangelist, insisted on keeping the bench of bishops decently stocked with Cambridge men). Shaftesbury's weakness as an ecclesiastical adviser was that he was hostile to learned divines, confining them to deaneries, and insisted on active, parochial, bishops whose intellectual shortcomings centralized Gladstone. At least Shaftesbury had the consolation of praying over the dying Palmerston in 1865 and convinced himself that the old man had "joined in the confession of sins and trusted in the merits of the All-powerful Redeemer". (How different from the ghostly death-bed

of Minny's uncle Melbourne! A scene not even that of a heartless, for then there would have been the "image of a ritual"; "it was the death of an animal", no prayer, not a syllable about repentance, mercy, or judgment.)

Shaftesbury's dependence on Palmerston is measured by the extent of his panic as Palmerston declined and by his sense of desolation in an uncongenial era after 1865 as Gladstone and Disraeli entered upon their inheritances. This was not the only thing that made the new era uncongenial. Shaftesbury increasingly found himself out of humour with the new trends in philanthropy. He disliked the fanaticism of the new anti-alcohol movement. He detested every aspect of the Salvation Army. He associated in the early stages with the Charity Organization Society's rationalization and tightening-up of the provision of relief, but he soon complained about a want of the old merciful paternalism. He had nothing whatever to do, it seems, with the most famous campaign of righteousness of the time, Josephine Butler's agitation against the Contagious Diseases Acts by which the state legislated for, and thereby condoned, licensed prostitution. Why? This is a question Fintyson does not ask; but he ought to have. Nor did the new times care that much for Shaftesbury. He was hurt not to be asked to join the revivists Morley and Stoney on their committee in the 1870s. He relapsed, grumblingly, into a figure-head role, denouncing the "mischief of State Aid" and reflecting that though "hitherto we have done too little" it was now to be feared that "in some respects we may do too much". . . . It is a melancholy system that tends to debase a large mass of people to the condition of the nursery, where children look to the father and mother, and do nothing for themselves.

Certainly, in the end, Dr Fintyson's exercise is not one of "re-bunking". His claims on Shaftesbury's behalf in that area where Shaftesbury most needs convincing claims made for him - the large-scale effectiveness of his philanthropic activities - are modest enough. Shaftesbury's greatest achievement was to act as a focus of public attention: Victorian iconography makes it absolutely clear that the more "sentimental" the cause - climbing-boys, chimney-sweeps, ragged schools - the greater was Shaftesbury's impress. Shaftesbury failed miserably in his primary quest to evangelize the Church of England and the British peoples (and, for that matter, the Indians and the Chinese, for whom he had high hopes). He failed even to save the Church from the infidel Neologians or the popish Puseyites. He failed in his secondary quest to alleviate social distress by independent paternalism and being an example to his order. But he did become, like the image on his monument in Piccadilly Circus, a kind of public talisman.

## A Good Read

That summer it was Ibsen, Merx and Gide.

I got out of his you-stuck-up-bugger looks:

ah sometimes think you read too many books.

ah silver had much time for a good read.

Good read! I bet. Your programme at United.

The habits of your whisky or your beer?

You'd never get unbecomingly excited.

poring over Kafka, or King Lear.

The only score you'd bother with is your darts.

or fucking football.

(All this in my mind.)

I've come round to your position on 'the Art' but put it down in poems, that's the bind.

These poems about you, dad, should make good reads

for the bus you took from Beaton to town

for people with no time like you in Leeds -

once I'm writing I can't put you down!

Tony Harrison

## Dignitary with décor

By Edward Norman

WILLIAM J. BAKER:  
Beyond Pert and Prejudice  
Charles Lloyd of Oxford, 1783-1829  
245pp. University of Maine at  
Orono Press. \$20.

When Bishop Lloyd of Oxford died in 1829, just after the political excitement over Catholic Emancipation, neither his family nor his colleagues provided a permanent memorial to his labours apart from a plaque in the cathedral. No one was commissioned to write a biography; no collection of his writings was undertaken; no institutions or prizes were founded in his honour. Lloyd expired out of favour with many of those who might have furnished these conventionalities: he had just changed sides on the Catholic question, in sympathy with his great pupil, "turncoat" Peel.

Even had that not been so, however, the case for fixing his greatness was not altogether obvious. He was an uncorrupt if rather worldly man; but he was neither a formidable scholar nor an effective administrator. He wrote almost nothing, and an enormous amount of his time was expended in attempting to manipulate others in the hope of arranging patronage satisfactorily. In the world of the early nineteenth century that was perhaps unavoidable. It was also hardly novel, in the University society of the time, that a Professor of Divinity should attract an obituary notice which observed that he never "in the slightest degree distinguished himself in the world of letters". His lack of importance clearly made his correspondents less than reverential in the treatment of his missives. In consequence, over many of the pressing concerns of the day, his opinions have been lost. After reference, for example, to the Cato Street Conspiracy and to the Queen Caroline affair, William J. Baker, in this study, has to remark that "unfortunately we have no record of Lloyd's reflections on these matters". In the end, one has to be content with the information that Lloyd "was the first person ever to publish *The Book of Common Prayer* with red-lettered rubrics". It was not, even in the circumstances of the day, exactly an astounding achievement.

Although the reader may justifiably query the intellectual value of a life of Lloyd, however, this book does have merits. It is a gentle and informed account of early nineteenth-century Oxford - and especially of Christ Church - written with accuracy and perception, if also with a devotion to

supererogatory detail which cannot fail to weary the sensibilities. Other recent American biographies of British historical figures have become remarkable for this unhappy characteristic. Professor Baker excludes it at every pore. Here the reader will discover such futilities as a ponderous analysis, by profession, of 127 members of the Eton Fifth Form of 1802. ("Of the 14 young men who would become military officers, four would be killed in the Napoleonic War, and another 14 were destined for posts in the colonies or India.") We are told the dates and prices of the volumes in the Bishop's rather unremarkable library. There is even a paragraph describing the weather in the year of Lloyd's death. To do Baker justice, it must be recorded that he shows occasional restraint in this regard. Noticing that Lloyd's assault upon the opponents of Catholic Emancipation in the House of Lords centred upon those who had, as the Bishop put it, "reached that time of life when most men have succeeded from the busy scene of human life", Baker rather heavily adds: "The validity of Lloyd's interesting assertion could be determined only by a statistical analysis of the ages of the pro-Catholics." The reader's relief on discovering that this is not then provided surpasses most other sensations to be derived from these pages.

There can be little doubt that Lloyd's life alone was scarcely of sufficient note to justify a biography. The silence of a century-and-a-half has testified to that. By even Baker's generous standards, his subject's claim to this late memorial derives from his capabilities as a teacher rather than as a man of original thought or as a successful activist. He was an ambitious man and a fixer. He seems to have lectured completely and conscientiously - at a time when others did not - to the Oxford undergraduates who beheld him discharging the duties of Regius Professor of Divinity, an appointment he occupied concurrently with his bishopric. Since some of these young men later emerged as leaders of Tractarianism, a fragile thread may be discerned connecting Lloyd with the ecclesiastical *Aufklärung* which occurred just after his demise.

Baker makes the most of it. The reminiscences of the Oxford divines are exhaustively turned over to discover references to their indebtedness to Lloyd; but when the dedicated fruits of this research are yielded they scarcely make even a mouthful. Newman, Froude, and Pusey all attended his lectures. They found them satisfactory enough, too. Yet Froude's recollection was that they did not "get at anything"; they came "to nothing satisfactory". That is hardly the sort of reflection that should lead to the supposition, entertained by Professor Baker, that Lloyd played "a considerable part" in the foundation of the Oxford Movement, that he "was the instructor of the Tractarians".

There is, similarly, some exaggeration of Lloyd's significance as an educationalist. Baker sees him as exemplifying a "new breed of Oxford dons", "concerned, ambitious, industrious". Now the too certain thing about poor Lloyd is that he belonged to the old world with his wig and his card games, his obsessive "concern" not with the enlightenment of the mind, but with place and office. He was clearly also careful in the performance of his obligations. But he was emphatically not the precursor of reform. The best that can be said about Lloyd's intellectual contribution is actually disclosed in Baker's own summary: his "thorough treatment of the Scriptures made a lasting impression on the stolid mind of 'Pressey'". In Newman's account of his early intellectual and spiritual development - the first chapter of the *Apologia* - there is no reference to Lloyd.

Upon Sir Robert Peel, too, Lloyd's influence cannot have been so great or as decisive as represented in these pages. Peel was a pupil when he was at Christ Church, and Baker tries to establish a lasting connection. The two men certainly had a number of mutually convenient exchanges, mostly relating to questions of patronage. As a fairly senior member of the episcopal bench Lloyd was also consulted about Catholic Emancipation. The evidence for anything beyond a surface relationship is lacking, however, and when an attempt is made, as by Baker, to show that the two men cooperated over the Bullion controversy, in 1819, the texture of interpretation becomes very thin indeed. Peel's great Oxford adviser was Edward Colston, not Lloyd. Interestingly enough, Lloyd on one occasion compared himself with Colston: early in 1826, in the course of a letter to Peel soliciting the see of Oxford should it fall vacant. With that degree of modesty so characteristic of the Anglican hierarchy - and which had disclosed his suitability for office - he considered himself as high above Colston "as the Andes to a molehill". Throughout the entire Church of England, Lloyd added, his own appointment would be a popular one. "When his own career was at stake," Baker innocently remarks, "Lloyd was seldom given to understatement". Of such are the successors of the Apostles.

The failure to elicit new information about Lloyd's private life is a major disappointment of this study. That is scarcely Baker's fault; he has done what he can; he has probed every obscurely, he has excavated every learned receptacle in the pursuit of fresh stuff on his subject. But the new details contained in this volume relate entirely to Lloyd's teaching activities. The reader learns almost nothing about Lloyd's wife, or his family life; and the occasional oblique glimpses of his dull personality are rather economically distributed throughout the book. That is hardly surprising. As a young man, Lloyd had modelled his character and disposition upon the then Dean of Christ Church, Cyril Jackson - whom one contemporary adequately described as no "inspired wind". Nothing like that about Lloyd, of course; he was merely, according to Baker, one who was given to "sarcastic banter", who was regarded as "a bully". Newman recalled that Lloyd bullied him for "being an Evangelical". Perhaps, at least in this instance, the effect of Lloyd's preaching had a more portentous outcome than he would have foreseen. Professor Baker says quite bluntly of Lloyd - as one would expect of a contemporary - that he was "neither saint nor mystic, but harboured no inclinations toward such virtues". One of his pupils is rather soaking letter to his own mother, recorded a shocked disapproval of Lloyd's gambling habit. Yet Lloyd was not without the rational virtues of his time. He was decent, conscientious, reliable if called upon for help. He was even interested in religion. The merit of his biography cannot rest upon the exploration of such qualities, however, for they are scarcely bold or unusual.

Professor Baker's study is academically rather light-weight. What he has done - and done extremely well - is to provide us with a splendid series of pictures of early nineteenth-century Oxford. It is an aggregate of images whose value rests both in their accuracy and in their inherent interest. The Anglican dignitary to the centre of the frame is pretty small compared with the landscape in which he is set.

so great or as decisive as represented in these pages. Peel was a pupil when he was at Christ Church, and Baker tries to establish a lasting connection. The two men certainly had a number of mutually convenient exchanges, mostly relating to questions of patronage. As a fairly senior member of the episcopal bench Lloyd was also consulted about Catholic Emancipation. The evidence for anything beyond a surface relationship is lacking, however, and when an attempt is made, as by Baker, to show that the two men cooperated over the Bullion controversy, in 1819, the texture of interpretation becomes very thin indeed. Peel's great Oxford adviser was Edward Colston, not Lloyd. Interestingly enough, Lloyd on one occasion compared himself with Colston: early in 1826, in the course of a letter to Peel soliciting the see of Oxford should it fall vacant. With that degree of modesty so characteristic of the Anglican hierarchy - and which had disclosed his suitability for office - he considered himself as high above Colston "as the Andes to a molehill". Throughout the entire Church of England, Lloyd added, his own appointment would be a popular one. "When his own career was at stake," Baker innocently remarks, "Lloyd was seldom given to understatement". Of such are the successors of the Apostles.

The failure to elicit new information about Lloyd's private life is a major disappointment of this study. That is scarcely Baker's fault; he has done what he can; he has probed every obscurely, he has excavated every learned receptacle in the pursuit of fresh stuff on his subject. But the new details contained in this volume relate entirely to Lloyd's teaching activities. The reader learns almost nothing about Lloyd's wife, or his family life; and the occasional oblique glimpses of his dull personality are rather economically distributed throughout the book. That is hardly surprising. As a young man, Lloyd had modelled his character and disposition upon the then Dean of Christ Church, Cyril Jackson - whom one contemporary adequately described as no "inspired wind". Nothing like that about Lloyd, of course; he was merely, according to Baker, one who was given to "sarcastic banter", who was regarded as "a bully". Newman recalled that Lloyd bullied him for "being an Evangelical". Perhaps, at least in this instance, the effect of Lloyd's preaching had a more portentous outcome than he would have foreseen. Professor Baker says quite bluntly of Lloyd - as one would expect of a contemporary - that he was "neither saint nor mystic, but harboured no inclinations toward such virtues". One of his pupils is rather soaking letter to his own mother, recorded a shocked disapproval of Lloyd's gambling habit. Yet Lloyd was not without the rational virtues of his time. He was decent, conscientious, reliable if called upon for help. He was even interested in religion. The merit of his biography cannot rest upon the exploration of such qualities, however, for they are scarcely bold or unusual.

Katouzian's book is well written, packed with little-known facts, replete with illuminating flashbacks, insight. He has much that is new and interesting to say about the party politics, political maneuverings and individual intrigues of the period. For these things alone the book is well worth reading. It is rather his interpretation of the facts that is open to question.

The chief trouble is that, like too many social scientists, he starts off with a preconceived "model". For him (he is over-fond of jargon) the Pahlavi regime was a "petrolic pseudo-modernism". This, in Katouzian's view, was a bad thing; and so it becomes necessary for him to condemn it on all counts. Good cannot come out of evil, we must assume. The desire for sweeping reforms is dismissed as "obsessive and emotional socio-economic cravings". Industrialization, railways and roads, judicial reform and the codification of laws, educational expansion, female emancipation and family legislation - these were only ploys to ensure the supremacy and permanence of the regime.

Katouzian sees the history of the past fifty years as a simple struggle between the forces of democracy, led by such "intelligent, moderate, dedicated, idealistic" figures as Modarres, Mosaddeq, the nationalist prime minister of the early 1930s, Khamenei, the Third Force leader, on the one hand, and the conservative and despotic powers on the other, led by the Shah and his "arrogant, corrupt, infamous, pack of wild dogs, soulless puppets" (Katouzian has a nice line in invective); supported by the foreign powers, among whom he names (of course) Britain, America and Russia as particularly blameworthy (though to his credit he does discount the "conspiracy" theory beloved of many Iranian commentators). Nationalism, however, he places firmly if somewhat inconsistently in the enemy camp, and therefore, contrary to appearances, "Mogaddiq was not a nationalist".

Much of his work is vitiated by this "cowboys and Indians" approach. We get no recognition, for instance, that the failure of Mosaddeq's government was a failure of Iranian democracy, still less any attempt to explain this failure. For Katouzian a failure of democracy is a contradiction in terms; it can only have been destroyed by despotic forces backed by foreign interests. Katouzian's ideal is the "melli personality, force, party, Irish independence from foreign powers and opposed to the historic and functional Iranian despotism". But he does not explain why groups such as the Third Force, which he praises as most typically Iranian, never seem to have attracted much support. It is not enough to suggest that all these who do not support such idealism are at best "acting against their better judgment", and at worst "servants, henchmen, lackeys" of the regime.

However it is what Katouzian leaves out, rather than what he says, that mars his analysis. He dismisses, for instance, the role played by the huge influx of landless peasants into the cities, where their presence formed the backbone of the risings of 1978 and 1979, in a single sentence: "many of the immigrant peasants participated in this revolution" - an understatement if ever there was one! He nowhere mentions the increasing numerical dominance of young people, the result of health measures and a rising birthrate; in 1976 some 53 per cent of the population were under the age of twenty. But most important of all, it is not until his final chapters, with the benefit of hindsight, that he has anything significant to say about the role of Islam in Iran.

Perhaps he cannot be blamed for this. To most observers, even in the late 1970s, the power of the Shi'a hierarchy in Iran seemed to be on the decline. It is still far from clear (and certainly there is no explanation in Katouzian's book) how the religious institution developed so rapidly into a powerful political force. Probably the most serious mistake is to regard the Islamic Revolution in Iran as in any sense a spiritual revival. Formed and supported only by the political wing of the religious hierarchy, it was a simple bid for political power drawing its main support from the urbanized peasants, hitherto unperturbed by the religious hierarchy, who instinctively turned to the mullahs for leadership. Young, unemployed, deprived, poorly educated, they were easy meat for the demagogic appeals of Khomeini and his supporters. Having nothing to lose, they could easily be moved by calls to self-sacrifice and martyrdom, to say nothing of the fulminations against minorities like the Bahais or the Jews, the xenophobic rantings against the "satanic" foreigners, the castigations of the "irreligious bourgeoisie". Such exploitation of the prejudices of the illiterate and deprived is reminiscent of the demagoguery of Hitler in the 1930s or of the National Front in Britain today. The adulation of a charismatic leader is not of course confined to Iranians, but it is by no means uncharacteristic of them. For a time the Shah filled this role; and when he failed, the emotions were quickly and easily transferred to the person of Khomeini. Propaganda emanating from Islamic Republican sources bears a marked resemblance to that put out by the Pahlavi political machine. One has only to substitute the name and photograph of the Ayatollah for those of the Light of the Aryans, or Islamic for pre-Islamic imagery, and the transformation is complete.

At this point we encounter a common theme of defenders of "Islamic" revolutions - that, in contrast to the West where politics and religion are kept separate, in Islam there is no such division. In fact neither proposition is true, nor in any case are they relevant. All political institutions owe their development to the ideological and ethical principles woven into the fabric of the society that has given them birth. But this does not mean theocratic government. Islam, like any other faith, incorporates both the spiritual and the political,

HOMA KATOUZIAN:  
The Political Economy of Modern Iran  
Despotism and Pseudo-Modernism, 1928-1979  
389pp. Macmillan. £20.  
0 333 26961 6

BARRY HUDIN:  
Paved With Good Intentions  
The American Experience and Iran  
425pp. Oxford University Press. £8.95.  
0 19 502805 8

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the collapse of the Pahlavi regime was greeted by many intellectuals in the West, as well as in Iran, with euphoric anticipations of a new age. Anti-Pahlavi propaganda had made it certain that there would be little sympathy for the fallen monarch anywhere, but it was only the rare few who foresaw from the start the likely consequences of the wholesale destruction of a way of life that had dominated Iran with increasing momentum for more than fifty years. Homa Katouzian's book, though published only this year, was largely completed before the Revolution, and revised thereafter in two stages. So in March 1979 he could still write: "It is to be hoped that, for once, after centuries, the dialectic of Iranian history will yield a progressive synthesis". Yet already by the following September his growing disillusionment is clear: "It appears that the Iranian people have been condemned to act as the guinea-pigs for zealous social experimentation - one day, by despotic pseudo-modernists, and, another day, by authoritarian traditionalists; and that the hope that a genuine Iranian synthesis of worthy traditional and modern values and techniques might break this truly vicious circle has again been thwarted."

Katouzian's book is well written, packed with little-known facts, replete with illuminating flashbacks, insight. He has much that is new and interesting to say about the party politics, political maneuverings and individual intrigues of the period. For these things alone the book is well worth reading. It is rather his interpretation of the facts that is open to question.

The chief trouble is that, like too many social scientists, he starts off with a preconceived "model". For him (he is over-fond of jargon) the Pahlavi regime was a "petrolic pseudo-modernism". This, in Katouzian's view, was a bad thing; and so it becomes necessary for him to condemn it on all counts. Good cannot come out of evil, we must assume. The desire for sweeping reforms is dismissed as "obsessive and emotional socio-economic cravings". Industrialization, railways and roads, judicial reform and the codification of laws, educational expansion, female emancipation and family legislation - these were only ploys to ensure the supremacy and permanence of the regime.

Katouzian sees the history of the past fifty years as a simple struggle between the forces of democracy, led by such "intelligent, moderate, dedicated, idealistic" figures as Modarres, Mosaddeq, the nationalist prime minister of the early 1930s, Khamenei, the Third Force leader, on the one hand, and the conservative and despotic powers on the other, led by the Shah and his "arrogant, corrupt, infamous, pack of wild dogs, soulless puppets" (Katouzian has a nice line in invective); supported by the foreign powers, among whom he names (of course) Britain, America and Russia as particularly blameworthy (though to his credit he does discount the "conspiracy" theory beloved of many Iranian commentators). Nationalism, however, he places firmly if somewhat inconsistently in the enemy camp, and therefore, contrary to appearances, "Mogaddiq was not a nationalist".

Much of his work is vitiated by this "cowboys and Indians" approach. We get no recognition, for instance, that the failure of Mosaddeq's government was a failure of Iranian democracy, still less any attempt to explain this failure. For Katouzian a failure of democracy is a contradiction in terms; it can only have been destroyed by despotic forces backed by foreign interests. Katouzian's ideal is the "melli personality, force, party, Irish independence from foreign powers and opposed to the historic and functional Iranian despotism". But he does not explain why groups such as the Third Force, which he praises as most typically Iranian, never seem to have attracted much support. It is not enough to suggest that all these who do not support such idealism are at best "acting against their better judgment", and at worst "servants, henchmen, lackeys" of the regime.

## Fundamentalism in flood

By L. P. Elwell-Sutton

We get no recognition, for instance, that the failure of Mosaddeq's government was a failure of Iranian democracy, still less any attempt to explain this failure. For Katouzian a failure of democracy is a contradiction in terms; it can only have been destroyed by despotic forces backed by foreign interests. Katouzian's ideal is the "melli personality, force, party, Irish independence from foreign powers and opposed to the historic and functional Iranian despotism". But he does not explain why groups such as the Third Force, which he praises as most typically Iranian, never seem to have attracted much support. It is not enough to suggest that all these who do not support such idealism are at best "acting against their better judgment", and at worst "servants, henchmen, lackeys" of the regime.

However it is what Katouzian leaves out, rather than what he says, that mars his analysis. He dismisses, for instance, the role played by the huge influx of landless peasants into the cities, where their presence formed the backbone of the risings of 1978 and 1979, in a single sentence: "many of the immigrant peasants participated in this revolution" - an understatement if ever there was one! He nowhere mentions the increasing numerical dominance of young people, the result of health measures and a rising birthrate; in 1976 some 53 per cent of the population were under the age of twenty. But most important of all, it is not until his final chapters, with the benefit of hindsight, that he has anything significant to say about the role of Islam in Iran.

Perhaps he cannot be blamed for this. To most observers, even in the late 1970s, the power of the Shi'a hierarchy in Iran seemed to be on the decline. It is still far from clear (and certainly there is no explanation in Katouzian's book) how the religious institution developed so rapidly into a powerful political force. Probably the most serious mistake is to regard the Islamic Revolution in Iran as in any sense a spiritual revival. Formed and supported only by the political wing of the religious hierarchy, it was a simple bid for political power drawing its main support from the urbanized peasants, hitherto unperturbed by the religious hierarchy, who instinctively turned to the mullahs for leadership. Young, unemployed, deprived, poorly educated, they were easy meat for the demagogic appeals of Khomeini and his supporters. Having nothing to lose, they could easily be moved by calls to self-sacrifice and martyrdom, to say nothing of the fulminations against minorities like the Bahais or the Jews, the xenophobic rantings against the "satanic" foreigners, the castigations of the "irreligious bourgeoisie". Such exploitation of the prejudices of the illiterate and deprived is reminiscent of the demagoguery of Hitler in the 1930s or of the National Front in Britain today. The adulation of a charismatic leader is not of course confined to Iranians, but it is by no means uncharacteristic of them. For a time the Shah filled this role; and when he failed, the emotions were quickly and easily transferred to the person of Khomeini. Propaganda emanating from Islamic Republican sources bears a marked resemblance to that put out by the Pahlavi political machine. One has only to substitute the name and photograph of the Ayatollah for those of the Light of the Aryans, or Islamic for pre-Islamic imagery, and the transformation is complete.

At this point we encounter a common theme of defenders of "Islamic" revolutions - that, in contrast to the West where politics and religion are kept separate, in Islam there is no such division. In fact neither proposition is true, nor in any case are they relevant. All political institutions owe their development to the ideological and ethical principles woven into the fabric of the society that has given them birth. But this does not mean theocratic government. Islam, like any other faith, incorporates both the spiritual and the political,

the religious and the secular: the clerical leaders have political weapons at their disposal, if they wish to use them. As Katouzian points out, the religious hierarchy by its means, unanimously behind Khomeini, was supportive of the idea that the mullahs should involve themselves directly in government. Indeed orthodox Shi'i thought has generally been against such involvement, even when it has advocated theological supervision of secular government. Khomeini himself in his writings has seemed in the past to favour this view, mainly in his *Ulegha* (The Islamic Constitution), and it may well be that the practical problems of enforcing such supervision while remaining aloof have forced him against his will into the direct rule system that seems now to be taking over. No doubt the younger, more politically-minded mullahs welcome this back-door entry into the political arena. The fact that they have neither training nor experience is unlikely to be a deterrent.

The severest indictment of Katouzian's analysis, as indeed of most of his democratically-minded contemporaries, is his failure to see what the ultimate outcome of the Revolution was likely to be. This is scarcely surprising, given his simplistic view of the line-up of forces during the Pahlavi regime. By virtually ignoring the religious hierarchy, whom he saw as little more than incidental allies, the democratic opposition to the Shah, made no provision for the possibility that a section of the clerics would capture the whole movement in order to establish a regime ensuring complete power for themselves.

The Khomeinist regime is now in the process of establishing a form of despotism that has all the evil features of the previous regime, with, so far, none of its good points. All opposition is to be stamped out, democratic institutions are to be dismantled (the will of the people cannot be set against the Will of God); intellectuals, minorities, even the individuals, are to be eliminated from Iranian life. The arrest and execution or imprisonment of political opponents, the suppression of the press, the banning of political parties, the closure of the universities, the enforcement of religious practices such

as the wearing of the veil, are all part of the process. Meanwhile the economy has been destroyed, the educated technocratic elite driven into exile, the country plunged into a totally unnecessary war with neighbouring Iraq; and Iran's foreign sympathizers and potential supporters have been almost wholly alienated.

The intellectuals cannot be absolved of all blame for what has happened. During the Pahlavi regime their characteristic stance was to remain outside the political game, to regard the regime as corrupt and therefore unimpeachable while benefiting from its practical achievements, to criticize without constructing. Naïvely they seem to have believed that the overthrow of the Shah, achieved with whatever allies they could muster, would lead directly to a democratic regime run by liberals and moderates of Katouzian's stamp. It is ironic that the liberal commitment to the concept of popular democracy should have enabled the mullahs to gain supremacy by manipulation of the "will of the masses", while in fact proposing to replace the popular mandate by the "Will of God".

Nowadays many intellectuals both inside and outside Iran (for many have left) are beginning to realize what they have done. By helping to destroy the Pahlavi governmental apparatus, they have thrown the way open to Khomeinist reaction. The complaint of some of them, that we laid the tarmin, and the mullahs drove along it", might be more realistically phrased: "We pulled down the dam, and the flood waters of fundamentalism poured through it". Against this, vague notions of a democratic, decentralized system of government as outlined by Katouzian, leaning neither towards the modernism of the Pahlavi regime nor the Islamic traditionalism of the Khomeinists, are almost irrelevant.

More and more people are beginning to see, in the shape that "Islamic government" is taking in Iran, a betrayal of true Islamic principles - the responsibility of the individual before God, the brotherhood of man, humanity and compassion, tolerance and open-mindedness. But more to the point, the motives of the regime's grass-roots support, the urbanized peasants, are as materialistic as those of any other deprived people. They want food, clothing, housing, and when these do not result from their present leaders' policies, they will look to someone else. No one can predict the outcome of the struggle for power that will follow the death of Ayatollah Khomeini. It may well signal the collapse of the Islamic regime. But what will take its place?

Barry Rubin's book covers the same historical ground as Katouzian's, but is hardly comparable with it. For the most part it is a straightforward summary of political developments in Iran from the fall of Mosaddeq in 1953 to the death of the Shah in July 1980 (the first two chapters, starting with the Constitutional Revolution of 1906, are neither accurate nor original). The author's purpose, certainly, is to write an account of American involvement in Iran, and this involves him from attempting any deeper insights into Iranian society and politics, though it does not stop him from occasionally doing so, generally with rather superficial results - though his characterization of the most recent events is good. The chief value of the book is the use the author has made of American archives, and it is a pity that it was not possible for him to pursue these beyond the Mosaddeq period, for the subsequent chapters, drawing almost entirely on American press and radio reports, tell us little that is new. Nor are these sources balanced by anything from Iranian or even British sources, so that the overall effect, in spite of Rubin's critical attitude towards American policy, begins to sound like an apology for the twists and turns of American diplomatic dealings with the late Shah.

The general impression that emerges is one of American incompetence rather than incompetence, though there is little evidence of any deep understanding by American diplomats and intelligence officers of the forces beneath the surface of Iranian society. And of course it could also be construed as a reiteration of charges of American manipulation of Iranian politics. Rubin himself shows some awareness of the political role of Khomeini and his associates, and the book is certainly much easier to read than Katouzian's, even if it is not so profound.

## Acts of apostasy

By J. F. P. Hopkins

TAHA HUSSEIN:  
An Egyptian Childhood  
The Autobiography of Taha Hussein  
Translated by E. H. Paxton  
85pp. Heinemann. £2.25.  
0 435 90228 8

Taha Hussein was born in an Egyptian village in 1889. He was blind from early childhood (a fact never explicitly mentioned in his autobiography) but this disability did not prevent him from rising to a commanding position in the Arab literary world. He died in 1973. He wrote widely and influentially in a mellifluous and simple but highly idiosyncratic style on topics in Arabic literature and social affairs, taught in the Egyptian University, and was for a short time (1950-52) Minister of Education. He initiated and vigorously pursued many controversies but will be particularly remembered for the furor provoked by his book *On Pre-Islamic Poetry* (1926). Pre-Islamic Arabic poetry is a remarkable phenomenon of which the Arabs are rightly extremely proud. The traditional belief among them is that this poetry (of which there is a vast quantity) was produced by the Arabs before Islam, preserved by oral transmission, and committed to writing only after the establishment

of Islam. There is a striking contrast between this highly sophisticated poetry and the milieu which is supposed to have given it birth, and in later times much was forged for religious or political purposes. Thus a controversy arose among European scholars as to its precise nature and source, and some have been led to believe that it is unsafe to make any deductions from material of such dubious authenticity.

This was, in general, the attitude taken by Taha Hussein and was of a piece with his disgust at the Egyptian religious establishment, clearly visible in his autobiography. Pre-Islamic poetry is part of the fabric of Islamic tradition (which does not clearly distinguish religious from secular) and by impugnig its authenticity Taha Hussein was attacking the integrity of the earliest (by axiom uncorrupted) Muslims by accusing them of fraud, and also, by implication, casting doubt on the authenticity of the Koran itself, for the exegesis of which the ancient poetry is often invoked. Indeed, he stated explicitly that the Koranic passages mentioning Ishmael and Abraham are myths not to be taken literally. To the orthodox this made Taha Hussein an apostate, and the religious authorities deployed all their disciplinary resources against him. They did not believe in intellectual freedom, whereas Taha Hussein was an ardent advocate of freedom of thought and expression as understood in the West, and as he had learnt it in Paris. He

was duly branded a *kafir*, that is, an infidel. This did not really affect his career: in fact it increased his popularity among the many who shared his views but whom prudence obliged to remain silent. Taha Hussein never regretted his act, but he did not expose himself again to such violent censure. Though public demand led to the book being re-printed the following year, it was re-issued in a much watered-down version and has never been reprinted in its original form.

Hussein's autobiography, *Al-Ayyam*, ("The Days") was one of the first books in Arabic in the genre and appeared, spaced over many years, in three parts, of which the present volume is the first. This translation was first published in 1932. The second and third parts have also been translated into English; *The Stream of Days* (by Hilary Wayman) and *A*



## Particular horrors

By Alan Young

MICHAEL ONDAATJE:  
The Collected Poems of Billy the Kid  
Left Hand Poems  
105pp. Marion Boyars. £5.95.  
0 7145 2718 4

CARL BODE:  
Practise Magic  
54pp. Ohio University Press. £5.40  
(paperback). £31.  
0 8404 0362 9

ANTLER:  
Factory  
67pp. San Francisco: City Light  
Books. £8.50 (paperback). £31.  
0 87286 123 6

The Canadian writer Michael Ondaatje's book *Rat Jelly*, poems written between 1963 and 1978, was published in Britain early last year; it had already deservedly won for Ondaatje a second Governor General of Canada's Award. The first such award to the poet had been presented a decade earlier for *The Englishman's Boy*, a book which is belated confirmation for readers here of Ondaatje's poetic originality and virtuosity. The "works" of William Bonney in the Western frontier during the 1880s led to the creation during his lifetime and after of the Billy the Kid legend. The stories of this violent anti-hero who lived and died young have been passed down by word of mouth, through newspaper reports and interviews, and through the romance of pulp fiction. Ondaatje makes use of all these sources, as well as series biographies and some superb contemporary photographs, in order to re-create that world from the dark interior of Billy's skull. The result is a compassionate and convincing portrait not only of a savage individual but of the casually brutal human wilderness in which Billy was both villain and victim. Ondaatje's technique of many-dimensional collage and flashback are sharply conceived and brilliantly carried through. He creates the near-madness of Billy and his companions, the paranoia of the guardians of law and order, and the crazy instability of one (surely discredited?) era of the American Dream.

The focus of the book is Billy's horror-filled mind. Ondaatje himself, here as in other early poems, has been obsessed with the grisly particulars of physical violence and the modes of dying. His fascinated repulsion becomes Billy's, who sees death everywhere and at all times ("Blood a necklace on me all my life"). Wounds like eyes appear in air and bodies suddenly erupt with blood. Billy has to think constantly of the last easily killable:

that is why I can watch the stomach of  
shift their wheels and pins into each other  
and emerge living, for hours

The book has much grim humour and not a little rough charm and tenderness in its portraits of women, especially Billy's lady-love Miss Angela Dickinson, "her mind the only one in town high on the post." The delicate question of Billy's sexual impotence is treated with sensitivity too. But it is in the presentations of Billy as killer-victim and Sheriff Pat Garrett as cold law-and-order assassin that Ondaatje creates themes and characters of terrifying mythic energy and substance.

*Practise Magic* is a strangely misleading presentation of Carl Bode's most recent poems. They are – we are told by the writer of the book's blurb – "a sort of WASP voodoo." The titles of both sections ("Spells and Illusions" and "The Conjurer's Cloaks"), titles of individual poems, and a weirdo jacket-design indicate that Bode too has tried to hypnotize his readers, and possibly himself, into seeing bizarre thematic links and unified stylistic character which are just not there. If the presentation is intended as a joke, it is badly signalled and heavily unfunny.

This is not to deny that there are recurrent themes and styles in these ironic, slyly humorous, and often despairing lyrics. Love in oldish age, hurtful mockery from the young, and the increasing difficulty of meeting the sexual demands of a mistress are topics which bring into play Bode's capacity for bitter, sullen wit. In some poems, again often with the themes of love and death, there is self-conscious use of Jacobean diction and word-play, with echoes of the dark and magical effects of new Webster, now Beddoes:

Night. No stars. Let hellgramites  
emerge  
From the pale satin skull. Let lacewings  
cling  
To the latticed cage of ribs while chigoes  
sing  
Along the spine a spinal degree  
("The truncation")

Archaic English literary influences are found elsewhere – in Donne-like mannerisms, for instance: "Trio" begins, "Christ, yes. Yet I can defeat the sweetest smile/The liquid hair, the chromon on the religious wall." If Bode is possessed by anything however, it is by a deeply ingrained Puritanism; he has a Puritan's keen sensual absorption with the "time-dying flesh". Although he can write fascinating virtuoso pieces, such as the delightful "Monkswood" and "St. Carnival", his best poems are written in the plainest American speech-modes. "The Playground", a wise and moving poem for his daughter, is both subtle and direct, while "The Magic Word" and "Cantata for Council Flats" are social and political commentaries with an unusual depth of satiric indignation and bite.

Factory by Antler [sh] is a long, loud, and genuinely angry poem in the tradition of Allen Ginsberg's

Howl. Indeed, Ginsberg provides an enthusiastic if somewhat inmoderate testimonial: "Factory inspired me to laughter near tears. I think it's the most enlightening and magnanimous American poem I've seen since Howl of my own generation." From March to July 1970 Antler, then in his early twenties, worked for the Continental Can Company in Milwaukee, where he pecked tops and bottoms of tin cans. He undertook this soulless (and quite deafening) employment in order, he says, to earn enough money to write poetry. Factory, an attempted indictment of our industrial civilization, is one of the first products of his artistic labours. Unfortunately, his target-area is so huge and undefined and his poetry so insistently shrill that the reader is left with only a sense of confused turmoil. Antler's American Dream seems to be to turn back the clock to the more real world of Billy the Kid's time, or even to the first artists at Lascaux:

Beginning in the flickering of my torch  
to paint the antler dancer  
on the vault of my cave.

According to Antler, the world's factories are full of mute, ignorant might-have-been antlered dancers or poets. His judgments are often frighteningly irrational and insensitive. "Every day," he writes, "more cows, sheep and pigs are killed in America than all the Jews in concentration camps in WWII." Despite the probably intentionally boring din of words and the unintentional political naïveté, Factory, like Howl, has its moments of astute observation, sour humour, and strongly felt indignation. The poem's failure, like Howl's, stems from the simplistic and crackpot incoherence of its thinking.

## Appropriate thoughts

By Edward Larrissy

CHRISTOPHER LOGUE:  
Ode to the Dodo  
Poems 1953-78  
176pp. Cape. £6.95 (paperback).  
£4.50.  
0 224 01892 2

Whatever poetry is – and it may be many things – it is not simply a matter of making interesting statements. Those who share this belief are likely to be disappointed by a fair number of the poems in this selection from twenty-five years of Christopher Logue's work, a selection which at best is bright, at worst brittle and bleakly propositional.

But this is a remark about the mature, most characteristic Logue; he wasn't always like that. The early poems tend to be tall, plangent lyrics, with a hint of magical strangeness. In the poems from *Wend and Quadrant* (1953) the classical theme of love touched by mortality makes one think at times of Hardy, or perhaps Housman; but Logue is both more suggestive and more awkward than either of these. Both of these effects stem from inexperience trying to sound poetic on the basis of very common emotions: "How hard to be unlike, who was and yet like her in purity/to weep for whom she could not see/and hold to those, like me, who err." ("Five Lyrics", V). In *For My Father* the effect is a dolefully sentimental. Advice given by the poet's father is remembered. The poet asks: "Spider/how can I get his most, most gentle voice/across the sacrament of death?" – which may be deeply felt, but is not worth paying to read.

The title of Logue's next volume, *Devil, Maggot and Son* (1956) refers to an old Irish poem. And some of the poems selected here reveal the influence. In this case salutary, for Irish poetry – there is a clarity of form and thought and an ironic, bitter-sweet tone. Several of the poems, "First Testament", for instance, are really quite good. But the simple lyrics give way to the would-be

Jacobean hysterics of "Six Sonnets": "Be glutinous, be avid, Gorge her mouth/And in the swinish instants claim your mouthfuls of creation, occupies the air – /as much as her breath as of that South(her) insect, mental voice, her hemisphere".

Some of Logue's versions of Norad's *Rat Jelly* (1958) will be known to those who are interested in modern verse translation. They are very good – perhaps Logue's forte is translation; his Homer is brilliant. This is from one of the *Neruda* versions: "Drunk as drunk on turpentine/From your open kisses, your wet body wedged/between my wet body and the stroke of our boat/that is made out of flowers – /feasted, my guide /our fingers like talloons adorned with gold metal/over the sky's hot rim." I wonder how many contemporary poets have been interested in *Neruda*? A fair number I should guess. Yet it isn't so much *Neruda* as Brecht whose flavour Logue occasionally succeeds in capturing.

From *Songs* (1959) to the poems from *Abecedary* (1977), which conclude this book, one is often reminded of Brecht: political didacticism, the use of fable, a practical attitude. It would be interesting if Logue were as good as Brecht. He isn't. Take a poem with a title that says a lot: "The Story of Two Gentlemen and the Gardener or How to Grow the Sun." The old philosopher talks to the poet and asks how we can really know that it is the same sun rising today as rose yesterday. As you can imagine, the old sage thinks this is a lot of nonsense. But Brecht's *Galileo* is a play about a man who actually thought the earth went round the sun. Brecht's subtle and inquiring mind is not well represented by the bourgeois common-sense so often expressed by

*Rothke* (211pp. New York: Kennikat Press, Port Washington, N.Y. British Agents: Bailey Bros and Swinfin, Warner House, Folkestone, Kent. £12.75. 0 8046 9270 X) by Lynn-Ross Bryant is a critical study of Rothke's poetry. The chapter on Rothke's "Shared World" contains subsections on "The American Pre-

## Syllabic jests

By Gavin Ewart

EDMOND LEO WRIGHT:  
The Jester Hennefs  
63pp. Harry Chambers/Peterloo Poets.  
£3.  
0 905291 25 5

Edmond Leo Wright is one of the very rare poets who have invented a new form, his only recent rival in this respect being Edmund Clivehew Bentley. Like Bentley, Mr Wright is also a very able practitioner, exploiting the possibilities to the full.

The hennet, as those who admired *The Horwich Hennefs* will know, is a twelve-line stanza in "syllabic" hendecasyllables, rhyming *ababcbdeff*. The author tells us as much in a "Revised Note On The Hennef" at the beginning of this book. Presumably, if one interprets the name in a Lewis Carroll sense, this is a sonnet (more or less) written in hendecasyllables (more or less) – a hendecasyllabic sonnet. The original explanation of the metre, in the book of 1976, mentioned anapaests in the first two feet of each line.

The result, which is all that matters, is that regular scansion comes and goes. Hennefwise, a line like "who thought plays needed more than mere pretending" is just as good as "anyone anywhere no matter how rich" or "w's concertina'd into spaces". In this way the sonnet quality of the conventional sonnet is entirely avoided.

The Horwich collection (Horwich is in Lancashire) had forty-seven hennets, all about childhood. The fifty-five examples here concern a jester, Rex, who spends his time putting down a King (his name as it

was proclaimed him an Anti-King) as well as toffed-nosed dignitaries and simplistic revolutionaries. His function is the same as that of the Fool in *King Lear*. He calls the King "Junc". Most are Rex/King dialogues – rather in the manner of a dirty story ("I want a cup of tea!" said the King. "What kind of tea?" said the Queen. "C.U.N. tea!" said the King. I. Some do indeed inhabit the world of the obscene joke and the Exeter riddle, as when the Jester, in a comparison of himself with the King, cries "Here's my sceptre and two orbs – you've only one!" One, entitled "There's This Fucker! Wench, See", is actually a playback of a well-known obscene monologue satirizing demotic speech (compare, too, Privates Coins and Carr in *Ulysses*).

The first four subjects dealt with are fairly typical: causality (the *causa causans*, etc), over-great worship of royalty, making people free by law, professing not to enjoy synchopa. Sometimes Rex's final comments at some ice, sometimes not much. The King (Frederick the Great-style) is praised by the Court for his flute-playing:

At which Rex cut a caper  
round the music-stand, snatched away the  
singing. "Such confident trembling I  
can't see a  
King who rules with a flute! They're all  
just as if you weren't a professional  
king."

The strength of the final couplet is absolutely vital, and sometimes the sting really is a sting, as when the prophet in the wilderness cries:

"Love the savage  
with his untamed tress! Love mildest  
Love the cruellest most! Make your  
pilgrimage  
to the freest of wills! Love the fiercest  
thing!"

Perhaps "freest" should have three e's, or a hyphen? There are some very satisfying phrases: "Roast swan was enough of a why" (ie a reason for ceremonial junketing). "I don't give two farts / fized by a flea for all the diamonds on / his Crown Jewels", or Rex saying to some bully boys "You deserve every buffalo in Britain". Rhyming necessities sometimes cause awkwardness: "Why, any law you could name is rigged so you can budge / who has nothing to prove he's one of the few!" "Budge" (rhyming with "judge") is not an apposite word here; it should be a synonym for "profit".

Cockney and an odd foreign accent enliven some of the poems – glottal stops in one, "v" for "w" in the other:

wenders pwoof beyond doubt at  
dwans near, and despond, tyants kins  
and nobles

are to tumble in blad  
"Tumble in blad" doesn't sound like any distortion of "tumble in blood", that I've ever heard. Sometimes Rex is a bit childish ("Scuse me!"). World-views, one hennet says, must at best be partial. Every subject sees one, limited, aspect of the King: theoretical and self-congratulatory.

It would be unfair, though, to characterize all of Logue's efforts in this kind of way: sometimes he manages something strange and interesting, usually by dint of a capacity for finding the surreal in the ordinary. One thinks of the curious tale of Mr Valentine from the volume *New Numbers* (1969), and indeed of a number of other poems from that collection. But in general an epigram of deadly smugness, "Winter 1968", is all too apposite: "How can I learn the revolution?/What do you do?/I am a poet./I understand. I used to be a poet, too."

"The Magic of Things" and "The Holiness of Things", the chapters on "The Roots of Poetry" contain subsections on "The Greenhouse World", "The Jungian Presence", "To Have the Whole Air", "Hello, Things Spirit!", Other chapters are "To Be Fully Human" and "The Search for the Spirit".

## From whale to whirl

By Harold Beaver

REGIS DURAND:  
Melville: Signes et Métaphores  
171pp. L'Asin: L'Age d'Homme

Melville's work is all puzzles. The puzzle of *Typee* is: are they or are they not cannibals? The puzzle of *Moby-Dick* is: what and where is the White Whale? The puzzle of *The Confidence-Man* is: is he one or is he many? There may well be an interpreter, either as narrator or protagonist, attempting to unpuzzle the strange case of the letrigic slave-ship (Basilio Cereno), say, or of the autistic scrivener (*Bartleby*). Invariably it is a matter of scrutiny and interpretation of signs.

But not all such enigmas, by their very nature, are capable of resolution. They present a cruel. They demand some kind of insistent, searching penetration. Which is, what Ishmael offers. His is a fluid, wayward, spiralling discourse, repeatedly unravelling and unravelling its enquiry, as if spooled on some never-ending shuttle. But there are also obsessional cryptographers, like Ahab, who follow their one fixed code, with an unflinching, if baffled, will, as if "some certain significance lurks in all things, else all things are little worth, and the round world itself but an empty cipher, except to sell by the carload, as they do hills about Boston, to fill up some morass in the Milky Way".

Régis Durand's intense, fragmented study – lyrically intertwining the won't and wsrp of its themes – follows Ishmael's example, not Ahab's. His aim is not to crack Melville's ciphers with beady-eyed insistence, but with questioning wonder; to pay Melville the compliment of reading his texts with the same flexible care as they wish on the not of reading; to search out not only the interpretation of the "signifieds", in all their confusion, but the "redoublément incessant" of the "signifiants". An object or mystère being, he argues, "n'est jamais réduit, et si le texte propose une interprétation, c'est pour aussitôt la faire jouer et dériver, l'interroger". Or again:

L'écriture est ce déplacement perpétuel, cette critique permanente des positions arrêtées, des positions d'autorité. En ce sens, on peut dire qu'il y a un maouement à une critique politique du signe chez Melville: une de ses grandes préoccupations étant d'interroger les positions d'énormité et de maîtrise du discours, et les impossibilités et les violences qu'elles entraînent.

Durand is well read in the Anglo-American tradition of scholarship, from Charles Feidelson and Warner Berthoff and Edgar E. Dryden to Faith Pullin's compilation, *New Perspectives on Melville* (1976); but it is on Durand and Lacan and René Girard and Gilles Deleuze that he most obviously relies. His critique of *Moby-Dick* is conducted in the wake of *L'Écriture et la différence* and *Le Séminaire sur la Lettre Volée*. In terms of what Durand calls "supplément", "la différence", "la dissémination" – rather than of Mattheissen and Feidelson. That is why it deserves to be widely read. His *Moby-Dick* becomes almost a meta-fiction debating the function of signs, undermining its own signs, and mocking all available codes. But not quite. He hovers on the brink. This is no post-modernist text, he insists.

Mais faire de *Moby-Dick*, comme certains, un texte qui ne jouerait que sur la scène de l'écriture, une sorte de "méta-fiction", ce serait assurément le déformer grandement, faire peu de cas de la jubilation et de l'énergie narratives, de la jouissance de l'aventure pour elle-même, de la chasse, des corps et des matières. Non, l'originalité de ce récit se trouve bien dans la coexistence des deux aspects, la constante interrogation redoublée.

The three foremost concepts employed are: violence, circulation, and desire. Memory is the inscription of

some original violence which is postponed – deferred – like the hieroglyphic scars on male sperm whales' backs: that is "la scène de l'écrécution". But signs may also be mute, indecipherable without seeming origin, like Bartleby, of whom it is written: "Bartleby was one of those beings of whom nothing is ascertainable, except from the original sources, and, in his case, those are very small". So small, in fact, that they consist merely of "one vague report", "one little item of rumor". For the role of rumor is like that of literature: both consisting of signs without origin; both presenting no more than "a draught – nay, but the draught of a draught", both simultaneously a distortion (of something) and a production (of something else) in an indistinguishable amalgam. The role of desire is in the need to sort, to sift this circulation of signs – these rumors (about whales, about Bartleby), these emblems (like the draught), these living hieroglyphs (like Queequeg).

"On errands of life," as *Bartleby* concludes, "these letters speed to death". The inevitable paradox, of death-in-life. This very paper, originating in the sexual violence of female labour (according to *The Tarantula of Mauds*), is destined to be defaced of every trace. All ends, as it began, in an open whirl, in the blank indeterminacy (of white whale or palid scrivener) that determines the ceaseless circulation of signs.

This Proteus-like instability of the text is reflected in the unceasing, yet hesitant, metamorphoses of the whale. Such is the "Bower in the Aracides", for as the jungle laces and interlaces, so the text itself reinvents itself from moment to moment, chapter to chapter, by acts of deconstruction which constitute further stages of construction; by a deployment of symbols which becomes a further enjoyment of the text. This flux and reflux of contradictory movements is held in a kind of oscillation whose outward manifestation is a rocking white-boat; whose interior trope is the oxymoron; whose ultimate aspiration, throughout Melville's work, is an ecstasy beyond life and death in trance.

This French approach, then, is capable of excellent results. But something is missing too. For Durand quotes all his texts in French. He is stronger on "dérision", therefore, than Melville's humour. If short on jokes, he is even shorter on Melville's puns. There is no acute section, for example, on "cordages" (as a linear code) without hinting at Melville's constant "ragging" in the rigging. So too the "Etymology", on *Moby-Dick*'s opening pages, is read as a metaphorical launch rather than the key to a much vaster semantic structure (*The Whale*) which the "whale", as verbal phenomenon, both anticipates and corroborates and unlocks.

## Growing old together

By William Scammell

KATHLEEN WOODWARD:  
At Last, the Rest Disfranchised Thing  
The Late Poems of Eliot, Pound, Stevens, and Williams.  
180pp. Columbus: Ohio State University Press. \$14.50.  
0 8142 9396 X

Kathleen Woodward's curiously titled study is a comparative analysis of Eliot's *Four Quartets*, Pound's *Pisan Cantos*, Stevens's "To an Old Philosopher in Rome", and the fifth book of *Pastorals* by William Carlos Williams. Ostensibly, the book sets out to link the chosen poems with "the problems of aging and the elderly in our century's industrial culture", since they present four converging but separate visions of aging, old age, and an aging Modernism.

The three foremost concepts employed are: violence, circulation, and desire. Memory is the inscription of

## The incoherent curriculum

By Steve Ellis

IAN F. A. BELL:  
Critique of Science  
The modernist poetics of Ezra Pound  
302pp. Methuen. £14.  
1416 31351 7

PETER ACKROYD:  
Ezra Pound and his world  
127pp. With 111 illustrations.  
Thames and Hudson. £5.95.  
0 500 13169 X

Ian Bell explains the presence of analogies from science in the critical writings of Pound and other modernists, concentrating especially on the years 1910 to 1920. The attempt to place the artist's "seriousness" on a par with that of the scientist was part of a wider effort to formulate the identity of modernism by drawing on certain discoveries of nineteenth-century and contemporary science: thus "advances in wave theory, field theory and the postulates of relativity and of quantum mechanics" which, in contrast to the materialism of much Victorian science, "revealed the world as a series of vibrations of varying kinds", were used to justify an art that would take account of this new understanding of reality.

We are primarily concerned here with Vorticism, of course, with its "lines of force" and arrangements of planes mirroring the developing awareness of a universe not of "things", but of patterns of energy. But Ian Bell goes far beyond Vorticism in his discussion of Pound's debts to scientists like Agassiz, Hermann von Helmholtz, and the physiologist Louis Berman, as well as to popular writers on science like Edward Carpenter and to those like Emerson, Whitman and Allen Upward who had anticipated Pound's interest in scientific subjects. This is a small selection from the copious number of scientists and quasi-scientists whose writings Bell adduces as impinging upon the modernist aesthetic.

The author is determined to overcome the problem that "there is little direct evidence of Pound's reaching to the sciences", he assures us of "bodies of material that would undoubtedly have informed Pound's thought". While one accepts that Pound could hardly have avoided the scientific interests of Emerson and Fenolosa, it remains difficult to believe, on the evidence presented here, that his thought was "informed" even at several removes by Leukippos's theory of the cosmic vortex, as presented in Burnet's *Early Greek Philosophy*; or that Archdall Reid's restatement of the theory of capillarity in biology underlay the modernist theory of tradition; or that Pound's use of the pseudonym "Helmholtz" in some articles of 1914 was occasioned by two treatises of

*Ezra Pound and his world* is a much less demanding affair: Peter

the above scientist on the conservation of energy and on vortex theory which Pound may or may not have known of. We are told, for example, that one of Agassiz's recapitulationist statements "suggests a prime cipher for the traditionalism evinced by Pound and Eliot", which is typical of a certain inflated vagueness that enters Bell's writing when he gets down to stating connections. Fascinating as much of the material is, one feels this might have been a more useful book had Bell curbed his desire to dwell on nineteenth-century science and given a more broadly-based account of Pound's (and Eliot's) critical positivism. His unwillingness to relate modernism's "scientific" component to other areas of the movement's concern leads us to approach Pound from an extremely narrow angle, even if we accept that component as modernism's distinctive feature. We are told where Pound may have got ideas from, but not what he did with them and even less how they might relate to the poetry of 1910-20, which is hardly discussed.

Nevertheless, this is an interesting and painstaking book, and so one would fault the author's industry and seriousness. He is concerned to attack Pound's "transcendentalism", an American tradition handed down through Emerson and Agassiz. The latter was convinced by his biological and paleontological researches of a design or unity in nature which was, in Pound's case confirmed by other scientific models: the world could be seen either as a set of force-fields or through physiology, as a totality of organic cells, and both modes misappropriate the social reality of human existence. In his final pages Bell attacks the transcendentalism of the *Cantos* and the authoritarianism of the "false promise" their seemingly open structure entails: the poem is in fact a "curriculum", encouraging the reader to go beyond it to complete its fragmented extracts (it will lead us to read, for example, the Jefferson/Adams correspondence), but insisting, *qua* curriculum, that it contains all the knowledge worth knowing, all the works of literature worth reading", and thus gesturing, like science, to a mysterious unity.

Certainly it was the original plan of the *Cantos* to provide a modern *summa*. But any reading of the poem must attend to the intermittent presence of Pound's realization, from the *Pisan Cantos* onwards, that the curriculum is unwelcome; that "my notes do not cohere" (CXVI). It is Bell's charge against modernism that, through science – "an order of cognition not generally available" – it preserved its "non-social individualism": "The privileged vocabulary that constitutes the discourses of Joyce, Pound and Eliot" insists on its removal from available social matrices and thus on its secretive usage, control of which is accessible only to those who are in on the secret.

*Ezra Pound and his world* is a much less demanding affair: Peter

Ackroyd has ably fulfilled the requirements of the series in which his book figures and produced a concise and well-proportioned account of Pound's life, with occasional literary judgments, as an accompaniment to a marvellous series of photographs. No writer has left a more extraordinary pictorial record than Pound. Few have lived so long or so signally as better to illustrate, in mind and body, the ravages of time, and the transition we are shown here from the handsome little schoolboy of the 1890s to the hawk-like octogenarian prowling around Venice is hypnotic and overwhelming. We are given, en route, famous scenes like the poet's meeting to honour Wilfrid Blunt in 1914, and Gaudier-Breaska clipping away at the "literatic head" of Pound, but there are new photographs, too, scenes from Pound's childhood, reproductions of documents, programmes and unpublished illustrations to his poetry, and a judicious choice of original book-covers and title-pages. The illustrations are of excellent quality and generously sized, and, considering that the photos of Joyce, Lewis, Hemingway and the rest are scarcely less compelling than those of Pound himself, form a handy gallery of modernism at a reasonable price.

Apart from displaying his competence as a biographer, Mr Ackroyd copes manfully with the task of writing intelligently on Pound's poetry, and in particular on the *Cantos*, in so short a space. Often his quotations are too short to be convincing illustrations of his critical points, and occasionally his writing becomes rather slack, but his generalizations strike one as just and perceptive in the main. He feels, however, that the *Pisan Cantos* are badly flawed by Pound's "self-indulgence", by his "As a lone suit from a broken ant-hill from the wreckage of Europe, ego scriptor" position; yet surely one reason for the power of these cantos is their presentation of a man who, through his earlier striving after a culturally unified and centralized Europe, seems peculiarly fit to embody *in propria persona* the breakdown of that concept. As the first serious indication of Pound's realization that his notes don't cohere, these cantos announce that awareness of personal limitation which gives a new intimacy in the later sections of the poem.

As for the life itself, Ackroyd makes an attempt to conceal its imperfections. He feels a strong sympathy with Dorothy Pound and with Olga Ridge in the privations each had to undergo as a consequence of Pound's desire for their both. Dorothy's daily attendance on Pound during the years at St Elizabeth's was followed by their ostracism three years after his release. Ackroyd quietly stresses the resilience of a woman whose husband's life and work was, more than any other writer's, a mirror of this confused century.

Eliot's own (characteristically acute) comments on the poem in his letters to John Hayward: "It [Little Gidding] may be too much from the head . . . The defect of the whole poem, I feel, is the lack of some acute personal reminiscence (never to be exploited, of course, but to give power from well below the surface). . . . The latter sentence, with its fascinating parentheticals, tacitly compares the new poem with *The Waste Land*, and finds it wanting.

In this chapter, as elsewhere, Kathleen Woodward makes some interesting points, but doesn't succeed in making them cohere. Often she proceeds at such a high level of abstraction as to deal simply in truisms. To at least one English reader, the strongest common denominator of the four poems is not the concern with old age, but their prescriptive obsession with the difficulty of writing poetry.



# Crucial carved capitals

By Alan Borg

M. F. HEARN:  
Romanesque Sculpture  
The Revival of Monumental Stone  
Sculpture in the Eleventh and  
Twelfth Centuries  
240pp. Oxford: Phaidon. £22.  
0 7148 2168 3

The great monuments of Romanesque art have a seductive beauty which is particularly appealing to contemporary taste, and the fact that many of them are still comparatively remote and delightful places only adds to their fascination. The motor-car and the camera first opened up this field, and it is one which remains best known to the general public through the medium of picture-books. Surprisingly, there have been relatively few general studies in recent years of the Romanesque style, or, as here, of one of its major manifestations, and the picture-books have been left to speak for themselves. One reason for this undoubtedly is that the mass of specialized research which has been carried out has made it difficult for any one scholar to impose an overall view of the subject. Indeed, one of the lessons of such research is that simplifications and generalizations are nearly always dangerous. This is not to say that general books should not be written; it does mean, however, that the task is a formidable one, and most scholars find it both easier and safer to produce a scholarly piece of detailed research than to write a coherent history of a medieval style. M. F. Hearn, an established medieval scholar, is therefore attempting a hazardous voyage, on which there are endless reefs to be avoided in weather that is continually changing.

"Broadly speaking, two types of book can be written about an artistic style. On the one hand there is the general survey, of the sort exemplified by the Pelican History of Art, in which all manifestations of that style are considered more or less briefly. Such volumes form ideal textbooks and normally provide the best sort of introduction to a particular field. Alternatively, there is the type of book which attempts to construct a theory or theories to explain a style or artistic movement, based upon the more detailed study of a number of key works. Professor Hearn's book is firmly in the second category, standing in a line which may be said to stem from Focillon's classic study, *L'Art des sculpteurs romans* (1931).

Hearn's stated aim is to construct a systematic theory of the development of Romanesque sculpture, based on the integration of several types of data and grounded in a unified method of classification. [It] assumes alternately the characteristics of a handbook and an essay... [It aims] to provide the student or interested reader with a balanced and coherent introduction to Romanesque sculpture.

Not surprisingly therefore, what we have here is a personal account of the development of Romanesque sculpture, and one which does not, in fact, give us a balanced picture. This is partly attributable to the limits which the author has imposed on himself; thus, the decision to restrict the subject to sculpture in stone results in the exclusion of the whole of Scandinavia, and the consequent neglect of a stylistic tradition which many would see as vital to the Romanesque aesthetic.

Hearn's views are essentially traditional. Romanesque sculpture is seen as an almost exclusively French style, centred on Burgundy and Languedoc, with a few outlying monuments in northern Spain, and Italy. English sculpture achieves about three references in footnotes. Western France, the Auvergne, twelfth-century Germany, and Southern Italy (except for the Bari throne) are among areas similarly neglected. These exclusions are not necessarily a cause for criticism, since the book

is clearly not intended as a survey. However, it would have been nice to find a rather more adventurous approach, and some attempt to incorporate new "key monuments" into the traditional canon. For example, the superb capitals from Nazareth, which from Hearn's call the finest things in Romanesque art, surely deserve a place in any general study of the style. So does the work of Benedetto Antelami, perhaps the most accomplished sculptor of the twelfth century, while the exclusion of well-known monuments such as St Pierre at Autun or St Trophime at Arles further restricts the field.

The list of what might be called first-division Romanesque monuments is probably shorter in this book than in previous general studies. Although Hearn sticks entirely to the traditional list, he excludes a number of what were previously considered "key monuments". Thus the cloister at Silos is relegated to a footnote, because some recent research suggests that it dates from c.1135, rather than c.1070 or c.1100. A correlation between importance and date is of course invaluable if one is tracing the detailed development of a style, but if we are concerned to understand how the Romanesque sculptural style came about and its rationale then precision in dating is less crucial. There is a poignancy here, for one of the monuments which is still allowed to be crucial, the Bari throne, has been and currently still is the subject of dating arguments of the sort which allow Hearn to disregard Silos.

It would be wrong to judge this book on the basis of what it excludes, however, and we must ask whether it provides a coherent view of its subject. The decline of monumental sculpture in the late Roman world, with its occasional survivals and revivals, is the first subject to be considered. Hearn argues that sculpture survived only in what had been remote provinces of the Western Empire, and the sculpture found in Visigothic Spain is taken to exemplify the final, linear style, which he sees as the ultimate debasement of the classical tradition. The validity of this view is to some extent questioned by the fact that the clearest survival of antique-inspired figural sculpture occurred in one of the genuinely remote provinces of the empire, the British Isles, where it is found on the Ruthwell and other crosses. These truly represent the decadence of the antique mode, while the linear forms found at S Pedro de la Nave in Spain or Cividade in Italy (forms which may be closely paralleled in other arts) can be seen as the birth of a new, specifically medieval aesthetic. This is not Hearn's view, however; for him the Carolingian Renaissance was only a fleeting revival of a moribund tradition, important in terms of the past rather than of the future.

An interesting suggestion is made that the group of monuments in south-western France, centring round the Intel of St Genes-des-Fontaines, which are so often taken as the first tentative examples of Romanesque architectural sculpture, are associated with the fading tradition of the antique. If this concept of a fading tradition is accepted, then Hearn is surely right to see St Genes as part of it; equally, the St Genes group might cause one to wonder if the whole of early medieval sculpture can really be described in terms of the demise of the antique.

The beginning of true Romanesque sculpture is to be found, Hearn claims, in the context of the decoration of capitals in the eleventh century and also in a series of relief slabs mostly from Germany. The importance of both these groups of material is generally recognized, but the rigid division of sculpture on the basis of its location tends to oversimplify the problem. The view that a carved capital is significant because it is a capital, rather than because it is a piece of sculpture, is hard to disagree with. One result of this approach is that capitals, which are seen as important in the eleventh century, cease to have such importance in the twelfth. Apart from the section on early capitals, and a subsequent dis-

mission of the Cluny choir and the Moissac cloister, this most fruitful field for the Romanesque carver is not discussed. This deprives us of some of the best and most characteristic Romanesque works, and makes it difficult for Hearn to give a balanced picture of many of the major monuments.

The same simplification is reflected in the section of the book which deals with what are termed "The Crucial Monuments c.1100". This is an exclusive group of five monuments: the altar and ambulatory reliefs of St Sernin, Toulouse; the Bari throne; the facade of Modena cathedral; the pulpit of S Ambrogio, Milan; and the Cluny capitals. Hearn's views are consistently interesting here, and the singular aspect of his approach is to see these sculptures as in some sense a unified group. Each does illuminate the other in an oblique fashion, although the altered and undated Milan pulpit seems out of place. The sense of the grouping breaks down somewhat in the following chapter, where sculpture at both Moissac and Compostela is attributed to the hand of Bernard Gilduin, who carved the Toulouse altar. If this stylistic line is to be followed (particularly to Compostela) it would have been easier to consider the monuments together. To see Moissac and Compostela as a second stage in the development of Romanesque sculpture is to make the problem less complex than it really is.

The later pages of the book are devoted to a study of the emergence and growth of the sculpted portal, from Cluny and Moissac to Sens and the Chartres transepts. This view of the history of sculpture from c.1120 to c.1200 in terms of doors and facades is similar to that which sees the history of Gothic architecture entirely in terms of vaults, and in both cases the approach has its flaws. Here, as elsewhere, Hearn's observations are always revealing and if this book does not provide us with a definitive introduction to Romanesque sculpture it will find an honourable place in the historiography of the style.

*The Wetherfield Collection of Clocks* by Eric Bruton (264pp with 250 illustrations. Northwood Books, 93-99 Goswell Road, London EC1. £15. 0 7198 05150 8) is a study of the famous collection of English clocks made over thirty years by David Wetherfield and sold in 1929. The book which serves as a guide to the dating of English antique clocks presents the collection chronologically and has separate chapters on technical features, lantern and hanging clocks, bracket clocks, longcase clocks, and marquetry and veneering. Many of the dates have been revised and the book provides much new material on the restoration of the collection. The book is illustrated with photographs taken from an unpublished sale album and with line drawings.

# Rationally recreational

By Helen Rosenau

F. HAMILTON HAZLEHURST:  
Gardens of Illusion: The Genius of  
André Le Nôtre  
418pp. Vanderbilt University Press.  
\$38.95.  
0 8265 1309 7

This handsome and well-illustrated publication is true to the spirit of Le Nôtre: it concentrates on essentials and refuses to be side-tracked. It is also sober, meticulous and to a certain degree monotonous, but so is the art of the great garden planner. André Le Nôtre (1613-1700) who had found in the Sun King, Louis XIV, an enlightened and effective patron. The most outstanding of Le Nôtre's works were indeed sponsored either by the King or by his courtiers and entourage, among them Madame de Maintenon.

André Le Nôtre was born in his home in the Tuilleries garden, the son of Pierre Le Nôtre, Premier Jardinier du Roi; he was influenced by Jacques Boyceau, the distinguished writer on gardens, known from his treatise *Traité du jardinage selon les raisons de la nature et de l'art* of 1638, to whom Franklin Hamilton Hazlehurst devoted an earlier book. Le Nôtre was a pupil of the painter Simon Vouet and François Mansart was probably his master in the field of architecture. He married Françoise Langlois, a member of the lesser nobility, and became the father of three children, being apparently a devoted family man, well integrated in his entourage and ready to rise in the social scale. He was not only an employee but also a friend of Louis XIV, a fact paralleled in the careers of François Mansart and his great-grand-nephew Jules Hardouin-Mansart. In 1679 Le Nôtre visited Rome, but by this time his style was formed.

Garden design was an important artistic opportunity. It is well to remember that it was earlier based on Italian influence, and that the dramatic landscapes of Rome and the Campagna had to be transcribed into the comparatively flat and arid terrain of Paris and its environs. It was there that Le Nôtre displayed his main activity. His gardens range from Vaux-le-Vicomte for the ill-fated Nicholas Fouquet from 1656, via Versailles from 1664 to the Tuilleries of c.1670 and the Palais Royal of c.1674. But more intimate gardens like Seaux are also worth remembering; here Le Nôtre added to an earlier castle he by then well established convention of a regular royal garden for Louis XIV's minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert. He did the same at Maintenon (1675-1678) and the Convent School of St Cyr, after 1685, both connected with Madame de Maintenon, the King's morganatic wife. Marly may well be an exception, since the twin rows of coar-

terhouses - a tribute to informality - a new departure in royal planning, are characterized not so much by garden as by architectural design.

The main features of Le Nôtre's plans are a large axial avenue, dividing the garden into two symmetrical halves, with accompanying flower beds, *bosquets* and *bois* (groves and grass plots) including lakes, waterfalls and fountains. It is typical of him that he added a cascade even to the modest *place* of Seaux. His name is associated with many sites, including Greenwich. Professor Hazlehurst lists these sites to which a number of German examples, such as Ludwigsburg and Schwetzingen, might possibly be added, though such local traditions cannot be substantiated. He emphasizes the element of surprise in Le Nôtre's gardens, which is aesthetically essential, since an unadorned symmetry would be tedious, even to seventeenth-century taste. Although already suggested, it is *Architectural* that "all the plans should have a certain variety, be not too much or too little" and the general rule obtained also for Le Nôtre, the problem being just how much variety was required.

It is important to remember that town planning and garden design had gone hand in hand even before the seventeenth century. The enclosed and tidy Renaissance garden echoes the Renaissance palace, and the *plan de la partie d'été* was ultimately based on the Vitruvian tradition; it represents the segment of a polygon, and was adopted, for example, in the plans for the Place de France in Paris. (This lay-out, which was never executed, was seen in an engraving by Claude Chastillon of 1610). From 1631 onwards, Cardinal Richelieu had pioneered a new town located near his palace, but it did not develop and the garden is still of a rectangular pattern. Another element affecting garden design was the opening up of forests for hunting, which meant creating regular alleys. It is in this tradition that the formal gardens of Versailles have to be set, the former presumably designed by Jules Hardouin-Mansart, the latter by Le Nôtre.

Charles Perrault in his *Mémoires de sa vie*, stressed the importance of the Royal gardens to Parisians, because of the need of fresh air for convalescents and for the public generally. The lack of recreational facilities was particularly acute in Paris. Colbert, Louis XIV's minister, failed to understand this and advocated closing the Tuilleries gardens, until persuaded otherwise by Perrault.

As the gardens of Le Nôtre are steeped in the reality of absolute monarchy, it is difficult to understand the title of Hazlehurst's book *Gardens of Illusion*. They are, rather, gardens which realize a dream, a goal, of revealing and enhancing the idea of a rationally controlled, satisfying environment. Le Nôtre's is an art form which was and fell with the Ancien Régime. How far it could be adapted during the French Revolution is an interesting question, since a controlled environment was one of the aims of that period too, and festivals of liberty, such as these arranged by the painter J. L. David, were indeed tied to the formal Royal tradition.

The illustrations in this book include the line-drawings provided by Philéas H. Hell III, stand up well when compared with the Le Nôtre originals. As to the text, Hazlehurst writes history in a traditional manner. He is master of his material, whether visual or recorded in archives. He includes full and useful notes, a glossary and bibliography. Like Le Nôtre, he gives us some, but not too many surprises.

But after this sober presentation, does he not feel inclined to venture further? The present book is a sober, sober eye-opener but we still need a fuller interpretation of his subject. Le Nôtre does not come alive because he is submerged by facts.

Carol Rumens

# The historical novel: violent inventions...

By Robert Hewison

C. NORTHCOTE PARKINSON:  
So Near So Far  
227pp (with 6 maps). John Murray.  
£6.95.  
0 7195 3813 0

JEAN STUBBS:  
The Ironmaster

415pp. Macmillan. £6.95.  
0 333 27311 7

RICHARD HOUGH:  
Buller's Guns

297pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.  
£6.50.  
0 297 77908 7

BERNARD CORNWELL:  
Sharpe's Eagle

264pp. Collins. £6.50.  
0 10 21997 2

K. M. CAMPBELL:  
Honours of War

205pp. Allen and Unwin. £7.95.  
0 04 823176 2

MARGARET MAYHEW:  
The Flame and the Furnace

203pp. Hamish Hamilton. £7.50.  
0 241 10525 0

TIOMAS MARIOTT:  
The Pagan Land

391pp. Michael Joseph. £7.50.  
0 7181 2000 0

RACHEL SUMMERSON:  
Hearts are Trumps

295pp. Sidgwick and Jackson. £6.95.  
0283 98749 9

DON BANNISTER:  
Long Day at Shiloh

277pp. Reutledge and Kegan Paul.  
£6.95.  
0 7100 0727 2

"You were saying, Sir Roger," said Ravenscliff. "that you have crowds here in summer. These are mostly visitors, I should suppose?" "Well, you know what the effect of the recent war has been. Folk who would previously have gone on tour to the Rhineland and Italy were unable to land on the Continent with any safety. They made Westmoreland a substitute for the Alps. These fellow 'Wordsworths' came to live at Grassmere about three years ago."

"But he was born here, surely?" "He was born at Cockermouth in Cumberland. Then comes this other fellow Coleridge - heaven knows where he comes from - and the Lakes are made fashionable."

It is likely that most readers of the TLS meeting this undigested lump of polished history in a novel would give a snort, and throw the book aside. But C. Northcote Parkinson's *So Near So Far* is representative of a genre of writing that appears to have the firm confidence of publishers and public alike, though it rarely gets any critical attention, either praise or blame. The "literary novel" is reported to be dying on its feet. Its page numbers, visibly shrinking along with its print run and its readership, but fiction continues to flourish in other forms. One of these forms is the historical novel, or more precisely (since the usual term suggests that these novels have a historical accuracy which they don't in fact possess), the history-novel.

Though the nine books under review have little in common other than that they are all set in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the fact that they come from nine separate imprints suggests a general faith in the genre on the part of commercial publishers. Not only that, *So Near So Far*, Jean Stubbs's *The Ironmaster*, Richard Hough's *Buller's Guns*, and Bernard Cornwell's *Sharpe's Eagle* are merely single volumes in series featuring the same character or family. None of them will come into the category of "Bestsellers", whose various clas-

sifications John Sutherland discussed in his study published earlier this year, but it is likely that their hardback sales will make a reasonable return, and their eventual paperback profit, there is safety in history, but the question remains as to what satisfactions there are in writing such works, and what satisfactions there are in reading them. The history-novel, after all, is still contemporary fiction.

The use of anterior settings enables the history-novel to accommodate variations on the narrower forms of war-novel, family-narrative, spy-thriller and romantic fiction along with its sado-masochistic sister, "the bodice-ripper". The essential elements of the genre, in descending order of obviousness, are historical events, technology, violence, and a long way behind violence in quantitative and qualitative terms of bodily satisfaction - sex. Almost entirely absent are character and plot. A concern for the intrinsic qualities of language and prose style - one of the defining elements in the literary novel - is rigidly excluded by the demands of naturalism.

The fact that actual historical events impose their own aleatory narrative helps to account for the weakness of the plots. Both *Sharpe's Eagle* and K. M. Campbell's *Honours of War* are set in Spain during the Peninsular campaign, while *So Near So Far* is the latest in a series on the Hornbeaver model, covering the naval activities of one Richard Delancey during the Napoleonic era. Delancey and his military counterparts lead their fictional lives in a real relationship to real events. *So Near So Far* includes a totally implausible attack by steamboat on Walmer Castle; Bernard Cornwell has to invent an incident in the battle of Talavera, but is careful to point out that he has. The nearer a protagonist gets to a historical figure - Pitt, Wellington, Queen Victoria - the less convincing both become.

As to the accuracy of the historical research, the non-specialist reader will have to take the author on trust. Yet the source-bound author is unlikely to challenge conventional historical judgments. It is noticeable how frequently both military and naval officers are concerned, with aristocratic titles and the ear be lifted out of regimental archives, or simply recite passages from drill or training manuals of the period. *So Near So Far* is almost pure bunkum, but it is certain that Northcote Parkinson has the rigging of the *Vengeance* precisely right. The accurate account of technology, rather than the dialectic of history, concerns these writers most, and a correctly reeled fore-top gallant will make up for any vagueness about the significance of changes of government. History removes the need for invention, so the narrator can concentrate on inventions.

A good many of these inventions concern guns. This is the case even in the two titles concentrate on industrial history, Margaret Mayhew's *The Flame and the Furnace* and Jean Stubbs's *The Ironmaster*. Margaret Mayhew's novel depicts an eighteenth-century Sussex iron foundry at the moment when charcoal is about to give way to coal; Jean Stubbs's hero has the new technology mastered in time to profit from the revolutionary wars with France. Big guns, little guns, steam engines, accoutrements, costumes and medals fill paragraphs and pages. If this reviewer has to read another discussion of the relative merits of the smooth-bore musket and the rifle he will place one, or both, to his head.

Much of the technology is applied to killing people. It is impossible to count the number of violent and horrible deaths in Thomas Marriott's *The Pagan Land*, a long novel plainly designed for the railway book-stall. The setting is South Africa in the 1830s, as the Boers begin their treks away from British rule at the Cape and their territorial imperative brings them up against that of the Matabele. Marriott has clearly studied the Matabele infantry training man-

uals, and recounts the atrocities of both black and white in loving detail. He manages a hint at the origins of *upstahle*, but a sharp stultic up the nose is more to his literary taste. No other book nuances the violence of *The Pagan Land*, though Bernard Cornwell's *Sharpe's Eagle* shows an unsadistic understanding of the brutalities of the Peninsular campaign, and indeed of military life in general.

History may reduce the need for a plot, but the conventions of narrative make the need for a hero or heroine inescapable. The military men are either paragons of prowess and virtue in the mould first cast by G. A. Henty, or, if they are at all interesting, they are social outsiders of some kind. Neither Richard Sharpe nor George Ingram (*Honours of War*) can afford to buy their promotion; Sharpe has even risen, most unusually, from the ranks. Jean Stubbs's *Ironmaster* is a self-made man, a former blacksmith, Margaret Mayhew's is half French. In *Buller's Guns* Richard Hough tries to ride two horses by having two heroes, one in the word-room, the other between decks, but they are both so brilliant and brave, and the book is so badly written, that they are unbelievable.

The choice of an outsider as hero seems a very twentieth century device. It creates conveniently defining social conflicts, but distorts historical reality. (The depiction of aristocrats, even when they are wealthy fools, also has its contemporary appeal.) And while a novel such as *Sharpe's Eagle* can be genuinely convincing in one direction, the unwary heroism and imperviousness to lead of its protagonist moves it in quite another. Lurking behind the naturalism of several of these stories is the old fairy-tale plot of the founding hero who becomes a prince. In none of the books by male novelists so far mentioned - with the exception of Matthew Eastman's wife in *The Pagan Land* - are the women characters convincing. Such sexual en-

counters as there are tend to be of the bodice-ripping variety.

*The Ironmaster* and Rachel Summerston's *Hearts are Trumps* have more interesting women characters, though twentieth century concerns are again detectable in the heroines' rejection of the social impositions on their sex. The *Ironmaster's* sister, Charlotte, is the widow of an English Jacobin and a friend of Mary Wollstonecraft (who is referred to, but does not appear). She is eventually transported to Australia for lending intellectual support to a Luddite revolt. The novel is the centre of a family trilogy and is badly apporportioned between brother and sister. Charlotte does not seem a very likely figure. There is no violence at all in *Hearts are Trumps*; Flora Pent is the daughter of another northern self-made man, whose money has brought him to London and the threshold of high society. Flora reads books and refuses arranged marriages. The topside and underside of London in the 1860s are well described, and Rachel Summerston has read her Victorian sex manuals, but there is still on element of fairy tale: the princess gets her prince.

If the history-novel-as-contemporary-fiction thesis holds good, then what we are presented with is an interesting conflict of attitudes. Most of these novels contain violence to people and to landscapes - the industrial novels have an ambivalent attitude to industrialization, *The Ironmaster* reads in places like a cross between *Haid Times* and *Mary Barton*. The protagonist tends to be the schoolboy, or a rebellious insider. Yet all the novels celebrate conquest and the goddess of getting on. *The Pagan Land* is an imperialist parable. It would seem that the capitalist individualist ethic flourishes, or if you prefer, that fiction favours fairy tales.

There is one novel here, however, which conforms to the category of history-novel yet transcends it. It is the most documentary but also has

# ... and a watery grave

By Richard Brown

DAVID BUTLER:

*Lusitania*  
734pp. Macdonald. £7.95.  
0 354 04183 5

The so-called omniscient narrator, who sees everything and effortlessly brings it all before our eyes, went missing, presumed dead, at the start of this century. But that, of course, was only in the serious novel. In fiction designed to attract a wider public, one less aware of the epistemological problems of our age, the narrator's all-seeing eye is still wide open. It is, for instance, much in evidence in David Butler's *Lusitania*, a full-scale reconstruction of the famous passenger-vessel sinking that arguably brought the United States into the First World War.

Butler's omniscience most likely owes something to the connection with television that has characterized his writing career since he began by writing scripts for the serial drama *Edward and the Girl*. In which he also acted. His three novels, *Death*, *Edward VII and Little*, were all the products of ATV historical reconstructions and in this kind of television drama omniscience is very prominent. Like TV historical dramas, Butler's novel has no personal narrator but rather a purportedly objective "camera eye" style.

By this means we get what seems to be the full historical picture. We see Kaiser Wilhelm and the naval review. Admiral Tirpitz and his "Schrecklichkeits" policy of terrorism and submarine warfare, Woodrow Wilson to America and Churchill and Grey in England. Indeed, in a flash-back in the prologue, we have a résumé of the outbreak of the war

from the shooting of the Archduke in Sarajevo to the FA Cup winners of 1914 (it was Burnley if you must know). Whereas an academic historian might wonder about the status and function of his material, Butler takes the broad lines of history as ready-made. He concentrates on getting certain details right, on satisfying various aspects of a reader's curiosity and on inventing human-interest stories at which the historian's mind would quite properly boggle.

Judged within these limits, *Lusitania* is, in that all-purpose critical phrase which can cover everything from getting the costumes right to putting grammatical sentences together, "well done". Butler is equally at home with political leaders, with spies in New York, with the wholesome family of a Canadian volunteer, or in the engine room of a German U-boat. He is also unforgivingly knowledgeable about naval furniture of all kinds. There is, after all, a considerable bulk of war-at-sea fiction and he knows quite well that his audience would be quicker to spot some inaccuracy in naval uniform than to worry about historiography.

There is a vein of stereotype in some of Butler's characters, especially the women. The perfect gentleman on the sinking ship give up their life-jackets, insisting that the women and children go first; and this is not the sort of book where the captain is likely to desert his ship. But in most cases these stereotypes are quite fleshly ones, not so much improbably as slightly too probable to be true, and in *Schwimmer*, the U-boat captain who feels the mental and moral pressures of his command, there is quite a substantial character study.

*Lusitania* might be seen to belong to several of the bestseller genres

the most literary merit. Don Bannister's *Long Day at Shiloh* is simply that, an account of the Battle of Shiloh on April 6 1862. One should not be misled by the American appearance of the book: Bannister is English and his novel is one of Routledge's rare investments in fiction; but the subject matter and current publishing economics combined to demand an American design. And the book is all the better for it.

*Long Day at Shiloh* has no hero beyond the collective Union army, from whose side the battle is reported. The focus is General Grant, and the extent to which he does not know what is going on creates a tension which a two-sided view would dissipate. Grant's surprise and ignorance is matched by that of his men, as Bannister moves in short cinematic takes through the tents and entrenchments of his army. The account has been built up from careful research into eye-witness reports and military histories, but the invented dialogue with its cinematic spelling brings the material alive - and shows that concern for language absent from so many other historical novels. Even Bannister, however, cannot resist a description of a drunken gunner naming the parts of the Ward rifle cannon.

Contained by the action of a single day and animated by the imaginative quality of the writing, *Long Day at Shiloh* takes all the lessons learned from John Keegan's documentary *The Face of Battle* and produces a book which finds a proper balance between history and the novel. In his conclusion to *Bestsellers* John Sutherland rightly argues for the cultural significance of less than literary novels, though he also points out that while they bring entertainment they provide "nothing in the way of serious intellectual, moral or social disturbance or received stupidity". As a battle-book, *Long Day at Shiloh* has an intellectual vigour which, for all their entertainment, most other history-novels lack.

classified in John Sutherland's recent study. There is clearly something of the "true history of the war" and the "disaster" types, and even perhaps links with about a fascination with submarine attack. The idea of having a German as the central character of a British war story shares a little of the excitement generated by the ruthless German spy in Ken Follet's *Eye of the Needle*. There is also plenty to satisfy curiosity about the occasionally problematic sex-life of U-boat captains and passengers on doomed transatlantic liners, right down to the unfortunate couple who are exchanging the conjugal debt just as the torpedo strikes. Compared to much best-selling fiction, though, this part of the interest is done with an admirable maturity.

The novel's central subject-matter is, of course, not new, and when it is pursued at this enormous length even the most devoted admirers of sea disasters might be forgiven for finding the going a little dull, especially if they remember in how few pages Hardy polishes off the *Titanic* or Hopkins ditches the *Deutschland*. Butler, however, counteracts boredom by indulging over the last couple of hundred pages, in more morbid curiosities. As the boat sinks and the passengers try to escape, the "camera eye" scans relentlessly from deck to deck, crushing, bruising, maiming, dismembering, decapitating and eventually drowning all in sight. Here Butler's imagination really gets into top gear as bodies are sucked into the sinking ship's funnels and belched out again, or dragged down by its radio wires. The stated moral of Butler's novel is that "War is Hell"; but it makes for exciting reading, even if most of the presuppositions about narrative on which Butler's novel rests sank at about the same time as the *Lusitania* itself, and with similarly far-reaching consequences.